S. HRG. 99-179

PHENOMENON OF JUVENILE FIRESTARTERS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETY-NINTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

THE PROBLEM OF ARSONS COMMITTED BY JUVENILES

APRIL 23, 1985

Serial No. J-99-16

Printed for the use of the Committee on the Judiciary

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

49-878 O WASHINGTON : 1985

S521-79

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

STROM THURMOND, South Carolina, *Chairman*

CHARLES McC. MATHIAS, JR., Maryland
PAUL LAXALT, Nevada
ORRIN G. HATCH, Utah
ALAN K. SIMPSON, Wyoming
JOHN P. EAST, North Carolina
CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, Iowa
JEREMIAH DENTON, Alabama
ARLEN SPECTER, Pennsylvania
MITCH McCONNELL, Kentucky

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR., Delaware
EDWARD M. KENNEDY, Massachusetts
ROBERT C. BYRD, West Virginia
HOWARD M. METZENBAUM, Ohio
DENNIS DeCONCINI, Arizona
PATRICK J. LEAHY, Vermont
HOWELL HEFLIN, Alabama
PAUL SIMON, Illinois

DENNIS W. SHEDD, *Chief Counsel and Staff Director*
DEBORAH K. OWEN, *General Counsel*
DEBORAH G. BERNSTEIN, *Chief Clerk*
MARK H. GITENSTEIN, *Minority Chief Counsel*

SUBCOMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

ARLEN SPECTER, Pennsylvania, *Chairman*

JEREMIAH DENTON, Alabama
CHARLES McC. MATHIAS, JR., Maryland
MITCH McCONNELL, Kentucky

PAUL SIMON, Illinois
HOWARD M. METZENBAUM, Ohio

NEAL S. MANNE, *Chief Counsel and Staff Director*
LAURIE WESTLEY, *Minority Chief Counsel*

CONTENTS

OPENING STATEMENTS

	Page
Specter, Hon. Arlen, a U.S. Senator from the State of Pennsylvania, chairman, Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice	1
McConnell, Hon. Mitch, a U.S. Senator from the State of Kentucky	2
Prepared statement	3
Denton, Hon. Jeremiah, a U.S. Senator from the State of Alabama	27

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF WITNESSES

McLaughlin, Pamela, founder, National Firehawk Foundation, San Francisco, CA	3
John, accompanied by John's mother, northern California; and Bill, accompanied by Bill's mother, Washington, DC, area	29
Aron, David G., chief fire marshal, Camden County, NJ	41
Clark, Dian W., clinical specialist in psychiatry, Lower Bucks Hospital, Bucks County, PA	48
Karchmer, Clifford L., research scientist, Law and Justice Study Center, Battelle Human Affairs Research Centers, Washington, DC	57

ALPHABETICAL LISTING AND MATERIALS SUBMITTED

Aron, David G.:	
Testimony	41
Prepared statement	44
Bill: Testimony	37
Bill's mother: Testimony	36
Clark, Dian W.:	
Testimony	48
Prepared statement	49
John:	
Testimony	33
Prepared statement	34
John's mother:	
Testimony	29
Prepared statement	31
Karchmer, Clifford L.:	
Testimony	57
Prepared statement	60
Addendum	64
McLaughlin, Pamela:	
Testimony	3
Prepared statement	9
Early Firesetting Patterns Detected in Adult Arsonists, by Jessica Gaynor, Ph.D.; Clifford Karchmer, M.A.; and Timothy G. Huff	12
The National Juvenile Firesetter Project, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Fire Administration/National Fire Academy, fact sheet	13
National Firehawk Foundation Program	18

APPENDIX

Dangerous fascination, by Eugene Kane, from the Milwaukee Journal, Jan. 20, 1983	69

Page

Covering letter from William Stamm, chief, Milwaukee Fire Department, to William H. Shultz, P.E., outlining the Juvenile Firesetting Deterrent Program 70

Letter from Kathleen M. Kaelin, disaster services coordinator, American Red Cross, to Lieutenant Braidigan, Juvenile Deterrent Firesetters Program, Milwaukee, WI 78

Memo from William Stamm, chief, Milwaukee Fire Department, re Juvenile Firesetter Program 79

Letter from Charles B. Schudson, circuit court judge, to Bruce W. Braidigan, fire lieutenant, Milwaukee Fire Department, regarding Juvenile Fire Setter Program 80

Letter from Richard P. Seelen, assistant chief, Milwaukee Fire Department, to Hon. Howard R. Tietz, alderman, 9th Aldermanic District, Milwaukee, WI 81

Memo from Bob Stelter, community resource coordinator, county of Milwaukee, re Juvenile Fire Setter Program 82

Memo from William Stamm, chief, Milwaukee Fire Department, re Juvenile Firesetter Program 83

Resolution from the Common Council of the city of Milwaukee, to Lt. Bruce W. Braidigan 84

Letter from William Stamm, chief, Milwaukee Fire Department, to Senator Arlen Specter 85

PHENOMENON OF JUVENILE FIRESTARTERS

TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 1985

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met at 10 a.m., in room SD-538, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Arlen Specter (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators McConnell and Denton.

Staff present: Neal Manne, chief counsel; Michael Russell, counsel; Rick Holcomb, office of Senator Denton; Vic Maddox, office of Senator McConnell; and Tracy McGee, chief clerk.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ARLEN SPECTER, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

Senator SPECTER. This meeting of the Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice of the Committee on the Judiciary will now proceed.

I regret the 14-minute delay this morning. But I think it worth telling you that it was necessary for me to attend an important meeting of the Veterans Committee so that necessitated us to somewhat delay the starting time. I express my regret at keeping everyone waiting here.

Without objection, my full opening statement will be placed in the record.

[Statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR ARLEN SPECTER

The subject of today's hearing is the phenomenon of juvenile arsonists and firestarters. The hearing will focus on the causes of, and potential solutions to, the problem of juvenile firestarting. I called for a hearing on this important issue because of its prevalence as a juvenile crime and its national ramifications.

Arson has a higher percentage of juvenile involvement than any other crime, and is increasing at a rapid rate. Approximately 8,000 juveniles are arrested each year for arson, and $1 billion in property damage is attributable to arson. In Pennsylvania, for example, over 3,400 arsons are reported each year—an average of 9 each day or 1 every 2½ hours. In 1983, there were 947 arson arrests in Pennsylvania; 39 percent of the arrestees were under 18 years old and 66 percent were under 25 years old.

Statistics on reported arsons in 1984 released recently by the FBI document 336 incidents in Philadelphia and 285 in Pittsburgh. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, communities across the country report that 40–70 percent of all documented, intentionally set fires are set by children under the age of 18.

It is apparent that juvenile arson and firesetting occur at an alarming rate nationwide and represent one of the most serious juvenile problems in our society today. Many facets of society are affected—families, schools, businesses, the criminal

justice system, mental health facilities, and the insurance industry. Based on my 8 years experience as district attorney of Philadelphia, I am acutely aware of the serious nature of arson, especially juvenile arson. At today's hearing, we hope to increase the public awareness of this national problem, and learn more about what we can do to solve it.

Senator SPECTER. For purposes of brevity I will summarize that the reason for this hearing is the very important problem of arsons committed by juveniles.

The 1983 FBI Crime Reports, the most recent ones available, show that in that year there were over 100,000 arsons reported. The monetary damage nationwide was in the range of $800 million.

Arson has the highest percentage of juvenile involvement than any other indexed crime. Thirty-eight percent of all persons arrested for arson are under 18 years of age, 62 percent are under 25 years of age. Males comprised 88 percent of all arson arrestees.

Arson is growing at more than twice the average rate of other juvenile crimes. The preliminary 1984 statistics show a recurrence of these alarming 1983 figures.

From the perspective of district attorney of Philadelphia, I saw the grave problems posed by juvenile crime generally and arson specifically. This hearing has been convened by the subcommittee to inquire into this subject to see what action might be taken by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Deliquency Prevention to deal with this mounting problem of juvenile arson and to hear from a distinguished array of witnesses on their findings and their conclusions with a view toward legislative action by this subcommittee and the full committee.

I am pleased to be joined by the distinguished Senator from Kentucky, who has made such an outstanding contribution already in his first few months in the Senate, Senator McConnell.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MITCH McCONNELL, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF KENTUCKY

Senator MCCONNELL. Thank you. I want to commend you for once again holding hearings through this subcommittee on items of great importance to the children of America.

I would like to ask unanimous consent that my opening statement appear in the record.

Senator SPECTER. So ordered.

Senator MCCONNELL. And I would like to apologize in advance to the people who will be testifying this morning. As Senator Specter just indicated, we frequently have things going on at the same time. And I must go downstairs and chair another hearing of the full committee on another subject.

But I want to commend Pam McLaughlin for the founding of this important organization. I want to also commend the children who are coming to testify today for their courage for coming forward. And I look forward to reviewing the testimony after the hearing is concluded.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Senator McConnell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR MITCH MCCONNELL

Mr. Chairman: I believe that this hearing represents another in the expanding list of hearings and inquiries conducted by this Subcommittee into the problems of law enforcement and crime prevention and the underlying causes of the problems on the juvenile level. As such, I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this hearing regarding the causes of juvenile arson, and to assist in finding a solution to the problem.

The statistics indicating that a significant portion of all arson committed in the United States is caused by those under the age of 18 are sobering. Even more sobering are the figures demonstrating that children under the age of 12 contribute substantially to the arson problem each year.

These facts make it especially appropriate that this hearing look into the nature and extent of the problem, consider the status of the programs existing to deal with the problem, and assess the potential for further efforts on the federal level to identify and deal with young firesetters.

The Subcommittee is fortunate to have before it the extremely qualified and informative witneses who have joined it today. We should perhaps be grateful to the National Firehawk Foundation and to its chairman, Ms. Pamels McLaughlin, for the innovative leadership they have displayed in the few short years of that foundations existence. I look forward to hearing from Ms. McLaughlin and the other witnesses and learning how we can best deal with the problem of young firesetters, and eventually reduce the number of adult arsonists as a result.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you, Senator McConnell.

We will proceed at this time with Ms. Pamela McLaughlin, who is the founder of National Firehawk Foundation, which is a nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing the incidence of child arson founded in 1982. It has more than 100 affiliates in some 28 States and is best known for its long-term pairing of firefighting volunteers with child firestarters under professional help and guidance.

Ms. McLaughlin brings an outstanding academic record, a degree in psychology, to her work.

We welcome you here and look forward to your comments.

STATEMENT OF PAMELA McLAUGHLIN, FOUNDER, NATIONAL FIREHAWK FOUNDATION, SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Ms. MCLAUGHLIN. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony for the record on juvenile firestarters and child arsonists. I would like to summarize my written testimony.

More children are arrested for arson than for any other major crime in America. Eight thousand children each year are arrested for arson, accounting for 37 percent of all arson arrests.

According to the FBI Uniformed Crime Report, the only national statistics kept on juvenile arson and firesetting, the crime has the highest rate of juvenile involvement of any crime. Nationally arson accounts for 18 percent of all reported fires and 25 percent of the total dollar loss from fires.

Fire service authorities view these statistics as the tip of the iceberg. Countless recurrent fire setters are arrested and charged, not for arson but for vandalism or malicious mischief. Fires set by children are reported as accidental both to keep the children out of the hands of juvenile authorities and not to have the family's insurance canceled. Still other recurrent fire setters start a series of small fires that go undetected by fire departments.

The majority of vacant buildings, dumpster, and brush fires around the country are also most often attributed to children. Who are these children?

Curiosity in fire is natural. Approximately one half of all young children experiment with matches, usually between the ages of 7 and 9. However, recurrent juvenile fire setters have passed beyond the natural curiosity of most children.

Fire to these children is a tool, a powerful means of expressing their depression, frustration and anger. Children who light fires are usually victims of child abuse, neglect, drug abuse, learning disabilities, undiagnosed giftedness or behavior problems. Over 85 percent of these children's are fatherless boys.

In these children firesetting is a symptom of an underlying behavior or family problem. Until the individual problem is identified and treated, the child's firesetting continues.

In a new study that was released this week by the National Firehawks Foundation, a study sample of 45 case histories of adult arsonists, were two thirds of these adult arsonists had started at least one fire before the age of 18. Of those adults involved in youthful firesetting, 50 percent participated in multiple fires during their childhood and adolescence.

Many of those involved in firesetting, 55 percent, had set their first fire before the age of 10. Through our network of affiliates we know of countless young adults now incarcerated for arson who were arrested repeatedly as youths. Beset with behavior problems, isolated from their peers, many of these men as youths were sought after by adult criminals. The criminals covered up their arson-for-profit activities by hiring juveniles to torch buildings.

The extent to which adult arsonists use children to commit arson is unknown, but we really feel that this could be a much larger problem than is currently suspected.

Recurrent fire setters are an anathema to the juvenile justice system. Many parents of juvenile fire setters move their children from community to community to avoid prosecution, or their children can be removed from their custody.

Children entering the system are often arrested repeatedly by arson investigators or the police who hope that building an arrest record will eventually bring these children some form of help from juvenile authorities.

Unfortunately, children that are recurrent fire setters or arsonists are not welcomed by foster homes or other facilities. They become kids who are in the revolving door of the juvenile justice system. Arrested, released, arrested until they end up as young adults warehoused in jails across the country.

Efforts to help juvenile fire setters and their communities around the country have been extremely scattered and disorganized. There is a lack of statistics in the local, State, and national level to clearly define the nature and magnitude of the problem. There is a lack of research, there is a lack of an organized dispersal system for information and available treatment programs like the Firehawks. And localized efforts remain unfunded by the Office of Juvenile Justice after 1 year of repeated requests.

It is time for a major initiative, in my opinion, by the Office of Juvenile Justice to address the No. 1 one children's crime in America.

I would also like to add that repeated requests to the insurance industry for public and private partnerships have also been to no

avail. And I would like to also add that it has been ironic that while some insurance companies have provided awards and contributions to my foundation, not one will insure our foundation for the work that we do. To date our foundation and its affiliates remain uninsured while we work with recurrent fire setters.

I think it is time that a major effort with the Office of Juvenile Justice, with mothers of fire setters, with children, children that you are going to speak with today, all get together and work to help the other 8,000 children a year that are arrested for arson. It is time for a major initiative.

If we don't have it, the kids in America will all end up in jail repeatedly like we have seen. Thank you.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Ms. McLaughlin.

If you were to generalize on the major cause that leads a youngster, a juvenile, to set a fire, how would you characterize it?

Ms. MCLAUGHLIN. I think any one of a number of underlying behavior problems. Usually there is something going on in the family. Many times the single mother is just over stressed, overworked. It might not be the family's fault.

But in other cases there is child abuse, neglect, learning disabilities, an underlying behavior problem that has to be fixed.

Senator SPECTER. So, what you are saying is it is a reaction to tension, to stress, to unhappiness that a child will have an outlet, do something as disastrous as lighting a fire?

Ms. MCLAUGHLIN. We call firesetting smoke signals. It is one of the most effective ways of getting people's attention in the whole world.

Senator SPECTER. When you talk about the need for the involvement of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, one of the reasons for convening this hearing is to build the case to retain OJJDP, because the Department of Justice is making its annual effort to eliminate the program which has been maintained by the Congress over the objections of the administration.

I think it is accurate to say that the motivating drive really comes from the subcommittee since 1981, since we have retained the program. What kind of a program would you like to see the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention undertake to meet this critical problem?

Ms. MCLAUGHLIN. It should be a multicomponent program. I think there is definitely a need for further research as to why child setters end up as being adult arsonists——

Senator SPECTER. What would you do on that, if I may interrupt you. If you are looking for research, how would you proceed? Would you interview adult arsonists, find the patterns of child behavior, try to find some causal connection?

Ms. MCLAUGHLIN. We would go into the jails and interview a number of adult arsonists and find out what types of child firesetters they were.

Senator SPECTER. Have you done any of that on a less formal basis?

Ms. MCLAUGHLIN. We have case histories of about 100 arsonists that were collected a few years ago. When we went through those case histories there was an extremely close link between the cur-

rent child and adult arsonits. We suspect from the preliminary data that there is a sexual abuse——

Senator SPECTER. A link between sexual abuse and arson. How would you account for that given your background in psychology, if you can?

Ms. MCLAUGHLIN. How would I account for that? I think that when a child is sexually abused and then he is put into a juvenile hall or jail where he might again be sexually abused in a prison facility and then released, that it exacerbates the existing psychological problem. So, that in the jail situation he gets what was starting to bug him in the first place and driving him to light fires.

Senator SPECTER. He feels very violated, very offended, and retaliates in a very offensive way himself?

Ms. MCLAUGHLIN. He is violated, he starts a fire, he is put in jail, reviolated.

Senator SPECTER. Have you personally interviewed adult arsonists in jail?

Ms. MCLAUGHLIN. Yes.

Senator SPECTER. Can you give us an illustration as to an interview or two or three perhaps where you have talked to an arsonist, an adult who recounts being a fire setter as a juvenile and the reasons for that behavior.

Ms. MCLAUGHLIN. One comes to mind in very specific terms, and it is a young man who is now about 18½. He was responsible for 32 structure fires around the—around New Jersey. And he came from a disruptive family. The father was in the home, they did not have the money for counseling. And he was sexually abused repeatedly by his father.

He was arrested, put in a jail environment where he suffered the same sort of sexual abuse, and he got out and continued to light fires repeatedly.

Senator SPECTER. How old was he when you talked to him?

Ms. MCLAUGHLIN. Eighteen.

Senator SPECTER. When you saw him in an adult jail?

Ms. MCLAUGHLIN. Yes; and he is now in jail for juvenile charges and the charges for when he was—what happened when he was 18.

Senator SPECTER. These adult arsonists maintain this propensity for just retaliation, profit, or what?

Ms. MCLAUGHLIN. Well, it depends. There is the revenge factor for many adult arsonists. And we think that perhaps if a child uses arson or firesetting for revenge, that he will use it as an adult. If he is still in trouble, if he has no job, or he is depressed and upset as an adult, he will fall back on that old behavior problem.

We also think, as far as arson for profit, that if a kid does not have any skills, he starts lighting fires to express himself, his bad problems in school, that he might fall with the wrong teenagers who are then hired by adult arsonists. And he becomes someone who lights fires for profit.

So, as far as Office of Juvenile Justice, we think that there should be more research into the problems of child firesetting and how these kids get into being adult arsonists. We also would like to see duplication of the model programs. My organization is completely made up of volunteers.

I think that the rapid growth of the organization and the way we have had to expand our activities, everybody has had to basically drop what we have been doing literally and just try to handle the phone calls and the various requests for assistance. That it is time that the Office of Juvenile Justice start duplicating programs that work. And not just ours, but some of the other programs around the country, juvenile fire setter programs.

Senator SPECTER. Your organization, as I said at the outset, is well known for the pairing of firefighter volunteers with child firestarters, which is an interesting approach, somewhat similar to a big brother program or, when I was district attorney of Philadelphia we had a take a brother program, trying to get high school students in contact with juveniles.

Can you elaborate on how the program works with your firefighter volunteers?

Ms. MCLAUGHLIN. Well, we have a 98-percent plus success rate. And I think it is based on the fact that most of the children who are recurrent fire setters are fatherless boys with a history of behavior problems.

The firefighters give the children the attention they lack. They teach them basic communication skills, and they work with professional existing city and county mental health people, like social welfare people, mental health psychologists, so that the family is treated in counseling and the child gets a firefighter companion.

It has been expressed to us that the kids, that one reason that they stop lighting the fires is they do not want to hurt the firefighter that is spending personal time with them. The firefighter takes the child into his home, the child becomes a friend of the family. And then the child is also exposed to the fire department and is allowed to come to the fire department if he is accompanied by the firefighter.

The relationships are very personal, emotional relationships that usually never end. In typical form the relationship would last perhaps 1½ years. But the kids and the firefighters have all become friends with one another, the mothers, everybody. It is sort of like a happy family.

And everyone, all the volunteers in the Firehawk program, have become friends with other kids. And we all sort of work together to help other people now.

Senator SPECTER. Ms. McLaughlin, if you had to give one bit of advice which might be seen on television to parents, custodians, guardians of the children who might be arsonists? What would you say, what signs would you look for, how would you advise them to guard against this problem?

Ms. MCLAUGHLIN. I think that the way to best guard against child firesetting in your children is to make sure that they get attention and love from their parents. If you are a parent who is overworked and over stressed, then perhaps you need to increase your support systems, perhaps consider counseling, boys clubs, other activities where your child can get some of the attention that you might not be able to provide him at that moment.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Ms. McLaughlin. Congratulations on your work. And we will be pursuing this matter to

try to obtain OJJDP generally and see if we can't give assistance on this problem.

Ms. MCLAUGHLIN. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. McLaughlin follows:]

Prepared Statement of Pam McLaughlin

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to provide testimony for the record on juvenile firesetters and child arsonists.

My own experiences with these children began in 1979 when I met a nine-year-old boy named Matthew who was responsible for lighting 800 trash can fires in one year. Matthew's parents were getting a divorce, and the child, out of confusion and anger, had turned to firesetting as a means of releasing his frustration and getting the attention he so sorely lacked.

He had become involved with the juvenile authorities, and his mother had turned to the San Francisco Fire Department to protect and counsel her son. As a volunteer with the department, in charge of children's programs, I was assigned to help this boy.

There were no treatment programs available for child firesetters at that time. So, noticing that my own two boys enjoyed the companionship of firefighters, I paired Matthew with a firefighter-volunteer, under the direction of a psychologist, Dr. Jessica Gaynor.

Soon other children and families came to the fire department requesting help. The numbers were so great that it became necessary to create a comprehensive system for dealing with the requests that started pouring in from around the country.

Our original "Firehawk" pairing has developed into a two-year-old non-profit organization, the National Firehawk Foundation, with over 100 affiliates in 20 states and Washington, D.C. At this time, it is staffed entirely by volunteers—from psychologists to firefighters and mothers of former firesetters.

My testimony today represents not only my experience, but the data and experience of the many dedicated Firehawk volunteers throughout the United States. On behalf of all of us, I wish to express our sincere and heartfelt thanks to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice, for this opportunity to present our findings.

More children are arrested for arson than for any other major crime in America. 8,000 children each year are arrested for arson, accounting for 37% of all arson arrests. According to the FBI Uniform Crime report—the only national statistic kept on juvenile arson and firesetting—the crime has the highest rate of juvenile involvement of any Part I crime. (Nationally, arson accounts for 18 percent of all reported fires and 25 percent of the total dollar loss from fires.)

Fire service authorities view these statistics as the tip of the iceberg. Countless recurrent firesetters are arrested and charged—not for arson—but for vandalism or malicious mischief.

Fires set by children are often labeled as accidental—both to keep a child out of the hands of juvenile authorties and not to have a family's insurance cancelled. Still other recurrent firesetters start a series of small fires that go undetected by fire departments. The majority of vacant building, dumpster and brush fires around the country are also most often attributed to children.

Who are these children? Curiosity in fire is natural. Approximately one-half of all young children experiment with matches, usually between the ages of 7 and 9.

However recurrent juvenile firesetters have passed beyond the natural curiosity of most children. Fire to these children is a tool—a powerful means of expressing their depression frustration and anger. Children who light fires are usually victims of child abuse, neglect, drug abuse, learning disabilities, undiagnosed giftedness or behavior problems. Over 85% of these children are fatherless boys.

In these children firesetting is a symptom of an underlying behavior or family problem. Until the individual problem is identified and treated, the child's firesetting continues.

In a study of adult arsonists currently in progress by our Foundation, a sample of 45 case histories of adult arsonists revealed that fully two-thirds of these adult arsonists had started at least one fire before the age of eighteen. Of those adults involved in youthful firesetting, 50% participated in multiple fires during their childhood and adolescence. Many of those involved in firesetting (55%) had set their first fire before age ten. Through our network of affiliates, we know of countless young adults now incarcerated for arson who were arrested repeatedly as youths. Beset with behavior problems, isolated from their peers, many of these men as youths were sought after by adult criminals. The criminals covered up their arson-for-profit activities by hiring juveniles to torch buildings. The extent to which adult arsonists use children to commit arson is unknown, but is worthy of study.

Recurrent firesetters are an anethma to the juvenile justice system. Many parents of juvenile firesetters move their children from community to community to avoid prosecution, or their children being removed from their custody.

Children entering the system are often arrested repeatedly by arson investigators or the police, who hope that building an arrest record will eventually bring these children some form of help from juvenile authorities. Unfortunately, children who light fires are the lepers of the juvenile justice system. Foster homes and in-patient mental health hospitals are not geared for children who can burn down their facilities. Last week in Los Angeles, for example, a foster care provider sued the City and County of Los Angeles for placing a five-year-old recurrent firesetter in her care. Across the country there are literally only two facilities in the United States which will take juvenile arsonsists in need of extended in-patient care, and many foster care facilities have an unwritten policy of not accepting these children.

There are other problems as well. Sentencing, probation and confidentiality procedures differ from county to county, state to state. For example, in Oakland, California, a teenager who lit one trash can fire in his school was sentenced to a youth facility for six months; while in neighboring San Francisco, another teenager was sentenced to three weeks for a multiple-origin $300,000 school fire.

Evaluation of child firesetters entering the juvenile justice system is not mandated. The youth from San Francisco, for example, received no evaluation though the fire chief of that city requested one before the child was released. Upon his release, it was learned that the child's mother had been deserted by a firefighter the previous year.

Child arsonists usually end up on the revolving door of arrest and release and re-arrest. Eventually these children end up as young adults warehoused in jails across the country.

Two children our Foundation is now trying to help might serve to illustrate the predicament of the thousands of other children across the country in similar situations.

Mark is an 18-year-old from New Jersey who lit 32 structure fires over a five-year period. He was repeatedly arrested and released during this period for arson. Prolonged sexual abuse by the child's father is suspected. The boy is now serving a five-year jail term—no mental health facility will take him.

Roger is a 16-year-old from Alabama. He is mildly mentally-retarded. Recently "voices" told him to burn two houses down, and if he did, he would become a hero. He did. He is now in jail for a two-year sentence.

It is the opinion of the Foundation that there is a great likelihood both youths' firesetting behavior will be exacerbated by their jail experience.

Efforts to help juvenile firesetters and their communities to date have been scattered or disorganized.

There is a lack of statistics on the local, state and national level to clearly define the nature and the magnitude of the problem.

There is a lack of reserach on the determinants of firesetting, the effectiveness of intervention strategies, and the relationship of juvenile arson to adult arson; and there is a lack of an organized effort and system for the dispersal and exchange of information between local, state, and federal agencies and communities on the probiem of juvenile arson.

Available treatment programs, like the Firehawks, or localized efforts remain unfunded by the Office of Juvenile Justice after one year of requests. It has been by sheer perserverence of individuals committed to helping these kids and the enormous need for services by children and communities, that Firehawks and local juvenile firesetter programs continue to provide even modest services.

Repeated requests to the insurance industry for a public/private partnership and financial assistance have been to no avail. It is ironic to note that while some insurance companies have provided awards and in-kind contributions of materials to the Foundation, not one will insure the city and county entities which run Firehawk programs. To date, the National Firehawk Foundation and its affiliates remain uninsured and unfunded by the insurance industry.

It is my opinion that the insurance industry has much to gain by forming local and national partnerships to help child firesetters.

First, many school departments do not report their fires or child firesetters to authorities. If they do, their insurance will go up.

Other community authorities have labeled fires set by children as accidental so that parents would not have their insurance cancelled. Last week I personally received a call from a woman whose house was destroyed by her mentally-retarded son. She told me that her child was a recurrent firesetter, but that the fire department told her that if they helped her son for recurrent firesetting, she would not receive her insurance money.

Children make up 37% of all arson arrests. What percentage of the insurance industry's arson resources go to help juvenile firesetters and their communities?

It is time that the number one children's crime in America be addressed. The children we have all seen are salvageable—future, decent American citizens—as the Firehawk 98+% success rate around the country still shows. These children and their

communities throughout the country deserve a better effort than is currently being provided—at the local, state and national level.

The choice is clear—provide a newly-organized effort or America will keep burning.

Thank you.

Early Firesetting Patterns Detected In Adult Arsonists

Jessica Gaynor, Ph.D.
Clifford Karchmer, M.A.
Timothy G. Huff

The purpose of this study is to examine the linkages between pathological youthful firesetting and adult arson. It is assumed that firesetting may be detected as an early behavior pattern for adult arsonists. In addition, there may be certain factors such as demographic characteristics, personality style, family and interpersonal variables and immediate situational conditions evidenced in early childhood which predict the future occurence of pathological firesetting in adults.

The first phase of this study which examines the case histories of 45 incarcerated adult arsonists and their early firesetting behavior has been completed. These adults were imprisoned for their arson crimes in the states of New York and California and consisted of males between the ages of nineteen and fifty. The most typical arsonist in this sample was a young, Caucasian male of about twenty-five years who already evidenced a long history of incarceration in various institutions such as juvenile hall, state youth camps, county jails and mental hospitals.

Two-thirds of these adult arsonists had been involved in at least one fire-start before the age of eighteen. Of those adults involved in youthful firesetting, 50% participated in multiple fire-starts during their childhood and adolescence. Many of those involved in firesetting (55%) had set their first fire before age ten.

To examine the specific patterns of early firesetting, motive and method, type of ignition, location and target and specific behaviors accompanying and following the firesetting incident were evaluated. The majority of adult arsonists (62%) admitted that their first fire-start during their childhood had been intentional, not accidental, and that most (81%) had acted alone rather than with partners. The most typical reason given for their early involvement in firesetting was that they were curious and wanted to see fire burn.

Most all (90%) of the first fires started by these adult arsonists were ignited with wooden or book matches. Only three of the arsonists thought to use any chemical agents such as gasoline or lighter fluid to hasten the spread of their fire. Eighty percent of these first fires took place outdoors, most frequently in a trash can or vacant lot next to their

house. Most of the arsonists (81%) watched their first fire burn, but only a small percentage (40%) either extinguished it themselves or called for help. Because most of the fires started were done so by children under ten, there was little alcohol or drug behavior accompanying the firesetting. However, those who do report being intoxicated during their first fire-start were also intoxicated in subsequent arson crimes, and many (65%) of the adult arsonists reported alcohol or drug use before, during and after firesetting.

Hence, the picture that emerges of the adult arsonist is that he has been involved in fire-starts at any early age, usually by himself, igniting a fire with matches near his home for the purpose of watching fire burn.

This firesetting behavior is not unlike many children in the seven to ten year old age range who express an interest or curiousity about fire and become involved in fire-starts to learn how fire feels, how it looks, how hot it is and how it burns. Unfortunately, we know little about the consequence these adult arsonists experienced after setting their first fire. Did their parents know about it? If so, how did they react? Were there any attempts at educating these youngsters about fire prevention and safety? Were any other kinds of help available to these youngsters from community agencies, mental health professionals, etc? One can only assume that the answers to most of these questions is "no", because current research tells us that it is fairly easy to stop early fireplay and fire-starting in children with the appropriate kinds of interventions. The lives of these adult arsonists might have taken a much different direction if the initial expression of their problem—that first fire-start—had been recognized as significant and responded to with the right kind of help and attention.

THE NATIONAL JUVENILE FIRESETTER PROJECT

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION/NATIONAL FIRE ACADEMY

FACT SHEET

PROBLEM STATEMENT: The juvenile firesetter problem has been recognized as a major cause of incendiary fires in America. Communities across the country report that 40-70% of all documented, intentionally set fires are set by children under the age of 18. In addition, the FBI Uniform Crime Reports had consistently shown that juveniles under 18 are a significant percentage of the total arson arrests nationwide. The fire service has dealt with these children for years without adequate preparation in screening and assessing their needs. Providing intervention was primarily based on "scare tactics" without knowledge and awareness of various intervention options and available community resources.

49-878 O - 85 - 2

FIRESETTER PROGRAM OBJECTIVE:	Reduce the incidence of fires set by young children through early identification of problem firesetters and improved evaluation and treatment of firesetters and their families.
PROGRAM STATUS 1977-1980:	Development of a program concept and guideline manual "Interviewing and Counseling Juvenile Firesetters Under 7 Years of Age." Development of interview tape "How to Interview and Counsel Juvenile Firesetters" and overhead transparencies for workshop delivery.
1980-1981:	Seventy-seven (77) training workshops held in 30 states to provide fire service personnel, and representatives of other professional agencies (juvenile justice, education, mental health, etc.) with information on initiating structured community programs for young firesetters. Eight instructors were trained to deliver the field workshops. (Above activities were accomplished through a grant and cooperative agreement between the Federal Emergency Management Agency--U.S. Fire Administration and the Los Angeles County Fire Department, Los Angeles, CA. FEMA-U.S. Fire Administration funded the development and pilot testing of a "Big Brother" program approach to reduce firesetting in moderately disturbed children. This was accomplished through a grant to the San Francisco Fire Department. Today this program concept is being shared through a national network known as "The National Firehawk Foundation."
1981-1982:	Project activities continued under the Federal Emergency Management Agency--U.S. Fire Administration/Arson Assistance Programs with the support of the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI). In July 1981, a workshop was held in Washington, DC, for 21 representatives of the fire service, mental health, juvenile justice, education and media areas to allow interaction among various disciplines involved in the juvenile firesetter issue, discuss roles and support in local community programming and review the initial draft of the guideline manual for children ages 7-14. This workshop was sponsored by the FEMA-U.S. Fire Administration.
1982-1983:	Project activities continued through a cooperative agreement between FEMA--National Fire Academy and Burn Concerns--Consultant Service, Chicago.

Twenty-four (24) additional field training workshops were conducted bringing the total number of workshops funded or partially funded through FEMA/USFA/NFA to 202. These workshops were held in 42 states with nearly 14,000 fire service and youth-related professionals attending. (These totals do not include the many workshops conducted locally, utilizing local expertise, which were not reported to the national project.

Over 125 local communities have been identified as having a structured community program approach for dealing with the juvenile firesetter. These programs vary in number of personnel and community agency/professionals involved.

Completion of the guideline manual "Juvenile Firesetter Handbook-Dealing with Children 7-14."

Work on "Instructors Guide" for introductory workshop delivery in developing a community program and dealing with the child 7 years of age and under.

Continued technical assistance to community programs and individuals involved and/or interested in the juvenile firesetter issue. Assessing the needs of non-fire service agencies/individuals in providing support and service to local programs.

1984:

Continued support for project activities through a cooperative agreement between FEMA-U.S. Fire Administration and Burn Concerns--Consultant Service, Chicago.

The development of a two-day workshop for representatives of the fire service, mental health/social service, education, juvenile justice, insurance industry, media, youth service and community groups.

Initial work in developing a guideline manual for dealing with children ages 15-18.

1984-1985:

The U.S. Fire Administration has funded the continued work on the 15-18 manual which will be completed this year. In addition, the USFA supported and funded the first Juvenile Firesetter Task Force meeting which brought together many firesetter counseling program officials from across the country. This task force did the preliminary work on the 15-18 manual and also developed milestones and recommendations for future firesetter programs. This effort also includes the development of workshop materials.

The National Firehawk Foundation, through USFA support, is currently conducting research to examine the relationship of convicted adult persons to determine if firesetting was a factor in their childhood.

The National Fire Academy has 25 deliveries planned for FY1985. To date, an average of 60 participants in each workshop.

USFA has been working with the Justice Department--Office of Juvenile Justice--to develop some joint evaluation efforts to determine the effectiveness of these programs.

To Date:

325 workshops have been delivered nationwide through the USFA/NFA program. These workshops have been delivered in 44 states.

220 documented firesetter programs exist nationwide as a result of the FEMA/USFA firesetter project.

PROGRAM APPROACHES:

(1) Fire department interviewing and categorization (screening) of firesetters to aid in selection of the appropriate intervention techniques.

(a) Education is the intervention for curiosity/accidental firesetters.

(b) Referral is the intervention for the problem firesetter.

Some cases require both types of intervention.

(2) Pairing of firesetters with firefighters to provide special attention or support to youth under appropriate psychological supervision).

(3) Education of youths already in institutions (convicted of arson) regarding the impact of firesetting.

(4) Combination of above approaches.

UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION ARSON PROGRAMS

The USFA is involved in several arson projects of importance to the fire/arson investigators throughout the nation. Listed are a brief description of some of these projects.

ARSON INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The USFA has been the primary developer of the AIMS system. The system is designed to run on the most popular microcomputers being used by the fire service today. As a result of the success of this program the USFA is presently involved in a project to develop the AIMS system in such a way that it will be available to anyone who uses a microcomputer. The program will be independent of any commercial type software as is now necessary.

COMMUNTY BASED ORGANIZATIONS ANTI-ARSON PROGRAMS

The USFA began funding CBO's in FY'84. There were 12 CBO's funded in the original project. USFA plans to fund approximately 25 more organizations in FY '85. These organizations are community oriented and involve communinty people. The CBO's work closely with fire service, law enforcement and other governmental agencies in developing anti-arson programs for the community.

ARSON RESOURCE CENTER

The Learning Resource Center located at the NETC houses the ARC. This resource center contains a wealth of information regarding arson mitigation. This center is being computerized for easier access by both users and entry personnel. This will make the ARC the central focus for arson related materials in the nation.

ARSON REPORTER

In cooperation with the ABA, Young Lawyers Division, the USFA is funding publication of a quarterly newsletter which contains up to date legal decesions which impact upon the fire/arson investigator. These decisions are made available immediately and are placed in the Arson Reporter in a synopsis form. In addition any other pertinent information having a direct impact on the fire/arson investigator is made available through the reporter. The ABA also is publishing an Arson Legislative Reference Manual for use by states fire marshals.

ARSON RESOURCE DIRECTORY

The USFA is updating the Arson Resource Directory to make information available on projects, organizations, programs, individuals, cities, states, etc. to the arson mitigation community.

FEDERAL ARSON TASK FORCE

The FATF is preparing to hold a meeting in the DC area in the near future. This meeting will bring the members of the FATF together for a three day workshop. This workshop will be used to gather information from the different agencies and prepare a report to congress on the findings as it relates to arson mitigation needs.

RURAL ARSON STUDY

Two projects are ongoing in the area of rural arson mitigation. These projects are attempting to identify the severity of the problem and then offering solutions as to mitigating the incendiary problem in the rural setting. The one project is identifying the differences between rural and urban arson investigations. The second project is studying whether or not successful approaches used in urban settings can be adopted to the rural setting.

ARSON STRIKE FORCE STUDY

A project designed to study the effectiveness of a strike force concept in investigating large arson losses, arson involing deaths and injuries and serial arsons. This project is identifying how to set up a strike force, how to implement them when needed and how to manage the strike force during operations. The initial project has resulted in a set of guidelines being developed. Future project will entail a pilot study of an area setting up a strike force.

NATIONAL FIREHAWK™ FOUNDATION

P.O. BOX 27488 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94127 (415) 922-3242

Basic Facts About the National Firehawk Foundation

A NON-PROFIT, TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATION

A Unique Mission

In the decade of the '70's, 54.6 percent of all arrested arsonists (in the United States) were under 18 years of age, including 11 percent age 10 or under, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports. It is only recently that the problem of child firesetting has received national attention and has been met with successful programs of local action. The National Firehawk Foundation distributes to fire departments and communities a proven-effective solution to the problem of child firesetting. With the help of an Advisory Council of nationally-recognized experts from all quarters of the fire service, as well as mental health experts and civic and political leaders, the Foundation is establishing Affiliates around the country who are bringing to their communities the Firehawk Children's Program. The Firehawk Children's Program is a grass-roots, self-help effort which provides comprehensive fire safety and training. The program pairs fatherless children who have been identified as firesetters with firefighter volunteers who act as long-term companions and role models to the children—under the direction of mental health consultants.

Genesis

Two major efforts, both helped by grant money from the United States Fire Administration/Federal Emergency Management Agency, gave the Firehawk Children's Program its start. In Los Angeles County, a system of identifying and classifying child firesetters was developed. In San Francisco, a research project was conducted to design and implement the Firehawk method of counseling these child firesetters. Hand-in-hand, these two approaches were shown to be 100% effective in reducing child firesetting. The Firehawk Children's Program is the only comprehensive counseling approach that provides all of the following services.

1. Screens and classifies children as to little, definite or extreme risk for firesetting;
2. Provides comprehensive fire prevention training for children at each risk level including educational games and activities, a companion program pairing fatherless boys with firefighter volunteers and a complete referral network to provide special services to children and their families;
3. Supports the training of community and firefighter volunteers to help them work effectively with children, and
4. Builds a way for fire departments and citizens to

FIREHAWK

work together to make their community safe and secure.

The program leaders believe that the most cost-effective method of distributing this 100% effective solution to child firesetting is to organize a non-profit, tax-exempt foundation. The National Firehawk Foundation is dedicated to distributing a high quality fire safety and prevention approach while minimizing high costs and excessive personnel so often typical of public programs. A major advantage of the Firehawk Children's Program is that it costs virtually nothing to maintain by fire departments and communities due to use of volunteers.

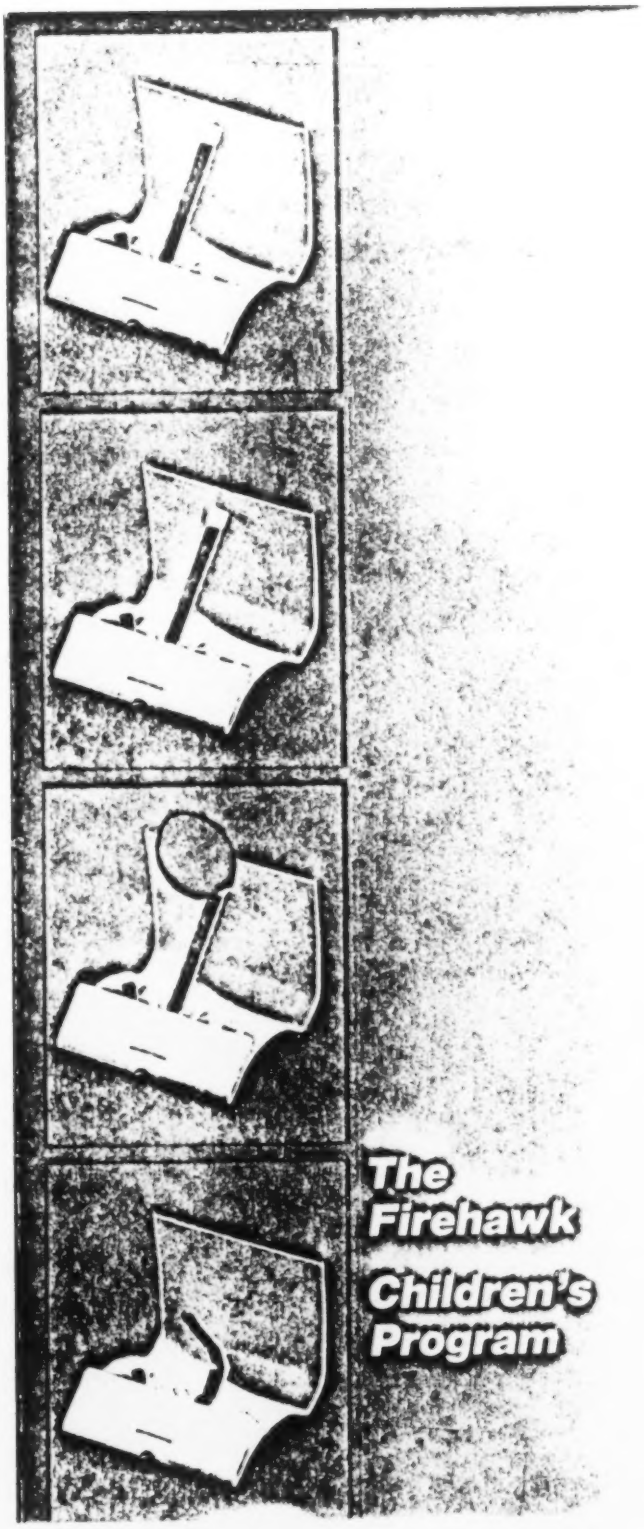
Growth

The National Firehawk Foundation was incorporated in October, 1982. Since its inception, as a result of attention from the media and fire service, the Foundation receives approximately thirty requests per week from fire departments and communities across the country. Firehawk Affiliates are starting in 22 states and over 100 communities. Affiliates are being established in small, rural areas as well as large metropolitan cities. There is a natural demand for the Firehawk Children's Program from all types of fire departments and communities. People believe in and are committed to the Firehawk solution to child firesetting.

Activities of the Foundation

The National Firehawk Foundation supports all research, education and intervention programs aimed at fire prevention and safety. The primary short-range objective of the Foundation is to provide technical assistance to Affiliates for the purpose of putting in place their Firehawk Children's Program. The Foundation distributes monies as grants to local Affiliates. In addition, they provide Affiliates with in-person and telephone consultation. A 300-page manual describing how to start and maintain a Firehawk Children's Program is available to all Affiliates. The Foundation's long-range objective is to distribute monies for the support of fire service, governmental, corporate and legislative efforts to provide a fire safe community for children and their families.

For More Information
Contact:
National Firehawk Foundation
P.O. Box 27488
San Francisco, California 94127
(415) 922-3242


The
Firehawk
Children's
Program

In your fire department and community, the Firehawk Children's Program can help solve a problem that has been with us a long time: the problem of child firesetting. Teams of firefighters have proved that the program does work. Those firefighters are men who volunteered to take part, and they helped build the program's success.

When concerned citizens are interested in learning about the Firehawk Program, usually they want to know "How big is the child firesetting problem?" and "How did the Firehawk Program get started?" and even "How does the Firehawk Program help the children?"

Let's look at some answers to those questions and others.

How big is the child firesetting problem?

A look at some numbers kept by the U.S. will show you how big the problem is:

In 1979, there were 2,846,000 fires. Of these, nearly one out of four was set on purpose. The U.S. has the world's highest rate of arson.

In all of the 1970s, more than half of all arrested arsonists (54.6 percent) were under 18 years of age, including 11 percent age 10 or under.

In 1983, over 8,000 children in the United States were arrested for arson!

We think you'll agree: that's a VERY big problem!

Until about four years ago, few people knew how big a problem we had. Many fire service records were not well kept. Many parents were slow to ask for help for their children. Not much was known about why children set fires. There were almost no programs to solve the child firesetting problem.

So the need was clear: something had to be done to guide our nation's youngsters away from the destruction of firesetting and toward constructive activities. This brings us to the next question.

How did the Firehawk Program get started?

Two efforts, both helped by grant money from the U.S. Fire Administration, gave the Firehawk Program its start.

In Los Angeles County, the Fire Department made a study of child firesetting. The result showed that there are three kinds of child firesetter risks: little, definite and extreme. Of the "definite" risk children, most fit this description:

1 young boys age five to thirteen
2 who come from homes where the father is absent or not caring
3 and who have had a recent change in family or school (new baby, job loss, trouble with school grades...things like that).

In San Francisco, Dr. Jessica Gaynor started research for a program to help child firesetters. The plan was to develop and test an idea brought out by fire safety volunteer, Pamela McLaughlin. She had seen how her own boys got along well with firefighters. So, she thought, "If a child firesetter could have a firefighter for a friend and an example, then the child's firesetting could be stopped."

That's where the firefighters themselves came in! — as volunteers to help start the program. Besides giving a child a man's attention, each firefighter tried to:

1 Raise the child's feeling of self-worth.
2 Teach the child how to "let off steam."
3 Help the child find things to do at parks, playgrounds, recreation centers.
4 Teach the child some basics about fire safety and prevention.

The program was a success from the start. After a year, there were no known fires set by any of the thirty children in the program. And, 90 percent of the children's parents said they were very satisfied with the program.

What is the main goal of a Firehawk Affiliate?

The main goal of a Firehawk Affiliate and its Firehawk Program is to help children who tend to set fires. The Program gives these children something to belong to...a place where people care about them and will guide them.

The Program tries to do four main things:

1 Provide a total package that can give the right help to any child interested in fire.
2 Make the most of the abilities and the experience of community and firefighter volunteers.
3 Provide complete training to help volunteers be effective with children.
4 Build another way that fire departments make their communities safe and secure.

We believe that the Firehawk Program can do all of this when it's at work in your fire department and community.

How does a Firehawk Affiliate receive referrals of children interested in fireplay?

Through the use of a community information program, a Firehawk Affiliate receives referrals from public agencies such as schools and the court system, youth-serving professionals such as psychologists and counselors, as well as the general public.

How does a Firehawk Affiliate determine the severity of firesetting behavior in a child?

Firehawk Affiliates screen children according to the categorization system developed by the United States Fire Administration in association with Los Angeles County Fire Department. This system divides a child's firesetting behavior into three categories — little concern, definite concern and extreme concern. The Firehawk Program has designed intervention programs for each concern level.

Who is responsible for screening the children and determining the risk level?

Initial evaluation of children may be done by a trained Firehawk volunteer according to U. S. Fire Administration screening procedures. However, all Firehawk Affiliates must have a licensed psychologist, psychiatrist or counselor serving as a consultant. All cases must be reviewed by this person **on a continuing basis.**

What kind of intervention program is recommended for each level of concern?

Every child is an individual, with individual needs. Depending on the child, recommended interventions could include:

1 Educational counseling consisting of 1 - 3 sessions with a firefighter volunteer and completion of Firehawk educational materials.
2 The companion program which pairs children and firefighter volunteers who act as friends and as long-term role models.
3 The referral program which offers professional help and/or community resources for children and their families.
4 The apprentice program which consists of fire department activities for youngsters who are interested in learning how to become firefighters.

What kinds of children are most suitable for the companion program?

Any child between the ages of 4 - 14 years of age who has an inattentive or absent father and who expresses a continuing interest in fire or fireplay is eligible for the companion program. Children who have benefited from the program range from curiosity firesetters to those incarcerated for repeated arson fires.

What if a child in the companion program needs more help than a firefighter volunteer can provide?

A Firehawk Affiliate completely analyzes the needs of a child at intake. A community resource and referral network is available at all times to make sure a child receives all the help he requires.

How are firefighter volunteers for the companion program trained and screened?

Firefighter volunteers are trained and screened in workshops lasting a minimum of 12 hours. Firefighters receive psychological evaluation and then learn about topics such as child firesetting and building and maintaining relationships with youngsters.

How much time does a firefighter volunteer spend with his "child"?

Firefighters are asked to spend approximately 8 hours a month with their "child" and make weekly phone calls, too.

How long does the average relationship between the firefighter and his "child" last?

These relationships generally last from 6 months to 1-1/2 years. The child determines when he has outgrown his need for a firefighter companion.

Is there any financial charge for the services offered by a Firehawk Affiliate?

No. There are no charges. If you would like to show your appreciation by a donation to your local Affiliate, it would help to defray the costs of the program. Your donation is tax deductible.

What is the National Firehawk Foundation?

To share nationally both the successes and the potentials of the Firehawk approach to fire safety and prevention, a national organization — The National Firehawk Foundation — was formed and is guided by and serves the entire national fire service community. The National

Firehawk Foundation is a tax-exempt, non-profit, non-membership foundation formed for the purpose of supporting fire safety and prevention programs. The Board of Directors and the Advisory Council are comprised of nationally-recognized experts from all quarters of the national fire service, as well as mental health experts and civic, corporate and political leaders.

Goals and Objectives. The primary goal of the National Firehawk Foundation is to reduce the incidence of fires, especially fires where children are either the victims or the setters, through the development of research, educational and intervention programs aimed at fire safety and prevention. Research efforts are supported which focus on the causes, nature and treatment of individuals, especially children, involved in firesetting and fire-related behaviors. Educational programs are developed which train personnel in responsible public agencies to work within the community to reduce fires. Intervention programs are supported which involve public agencies in helping to work with individuals, including youngsters who have been involved in firesetting. The National Firehawk Foundation also receives, administers and distributes monies in support of programs related to fire prevention.

If you are interested in learning more about the Firehawk Program in your area, please contact:

or

The National Firehawk Foundation
P.O. Box 27488
San Francisco, CA 94127
(415) 922-3242

Senator SPECTER. I would like to call a panel of two youngsters named John and Bill.

There has been a request made by the parents that the children not be photographed full-faced. This is an open Senate subcommittee hearing, so that the maximum we do is make the request. It has always been complied with in the past. And we would ask that it be observed at this time. But we do not have the power, authority, to make any compulsion on it.

But in the interests of the youngsters coming forward and providing information to us, we would be grateful for the cameras not showing a front of the face picture of the witnesses.

At this time would John come forward accompanied by his mother, and Bill accompanied by his mother.

We have now been joined by the distinguished Senator from Alabama, Senator Denton. I would defer to Senator Denton for any comment he wishes to make.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JEREMIAH DENTON, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF ALABAMA

Senator DENTON. I do not want to be interrupting, but if it is acceptable I will make an opening statement at this time.

Mr. Chairman. I want to commend you for your leadership in drawing national attention to the serious problem of juvenile arson.

When a child becomes involved in arson, a problem arises that has serious consequences for the child, the child's family, and the community as a whole. I join with you, Mr. Chairman, in your hope that the focus brought to the problem by today's hearing may help alleviate teenage arson.

During the last 10 years the number of fires attributed to arson has increased by 325 percent. According to statistics provided by the U.S. Fire Administration, one out of four fires is of suspicious origin. It is further estimated that half of those suspicious fires are caused by arson.

Arson is a deadly, costly, and tragic crime. It is deadly in that each year approximately 900 people are killed and 4,000 persons are injured in arson originated fires. It is costly in that each such fire also results in an average of over $6,000 in property loss. Each year, the direct property loss from arson totals $1.2 billion, and the indirect property loss totals $15 billion. Finally, it is tragic that in an unusually large percentage of those arrested for arson are juveniles.

According to the statistics provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the number of arrests for arson for 1983 was estimated at 19,800 for 84,700 offenses. Thirty-eight percent of those arrested were under 18 years of age and 62 percent were under 25.

Mr. Chairman, I ask the chart prepared by the FBI showing age breakdown for arson arrests be placed in the record at this point.

Senator SPECTER. Without objection so ordered.

[Information follows:]

Arson, Age-Specific Arrest Rates by Sex, United States

Age Group	1974			1979			1983		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
12 and under	8.26	15.01	1.22	7.56	13.62	1.21	6.20	11.16	1.00
13-14	32.91	56.90	7.97	33.58	58.30	7.86	27.81	47.91	6.81
15	34.53	61.42	6.64	39.53	69.74	7.93	28.25	49.32	6.29
16	28.02	48.69	6.59	34.32	61.10	6.55	24.43	43.48	4.62
17	22.34	40.85	3.16	28.52	50.78	5.47	22.11	39.33	4.16
18	18.01	33.35	2.39	24.63	44.80	3.86	20.30	36.07	3.96
19	16.40	30.29	2.43	19.14	34.31	3.70	19.74	35.63	3.35
20	12.12	22.02	2.18	18.03	32.78	3.15	16.92	29.99	3.48
21	10.37	19.07	1.68	14.41	25.25	3.49	17.35	30.07	4.44
22	9.72	17.08	2.44	14.78	25.53	4.03	15.00	26.23	3.67
23	10.74	19.17	2.42	13.26	23.15	3.44	13.86	24.17	3.44
24	8.50	15.08	2.04	11.91	20.25	3.62	12.17	20.41	3.86
25-29	7.77	13.55	2.09	10.05	17.39	2.81	12.01	20.76	3.28
30-34	6.06	10.76	1.50	7.14	12.15	2.25	8.75	14.78	2.82
35-39	4.86	7.95	1.91	6.45	10.90	2.15	7.52	12.60	2.59
40-44	3.99	6.83	1.26	5.03	8.44	1.76	6.49	11.11	2.05
45-49	3.32	5.94	0.86	3.54	5.90	1.31	4.50	7.65	1.52
50-54	2.23	4.01	0.59	2.66	4.89	0.60	3.47	6.45	0.71
55-59	1.21	2.11	0.40	1.49	2.83	0.28	1.91	3.34	0.63
60-64	0.94	1.76	0.23	1.05	1.95	0.28	1.23	2.32	0.28
65 and over	0.27	0.60	0.05	0.41	0.89	0.08	0.39	0.82	0.11

Age-Specific Arrest Rate: Number of arson arrests per 100,000 inhabitants belonging to a prescribed age group.

Senator DENTON. Mr. Chairman, the statistics may underestimate the problem of juvenile arson. It is believed that only a small percentage of the fires set by juveniles are actually reported. It is generally assumed that the family of a firesetter will only consider contacting the fire department for assistance when the fire becomes serious enough to require outside help.

Although there may be some disagreement about the number of fires started by juveniles, there should be no disagreement that juvenile arson or firesetting is a serious problem. It is serious in that the juvenile fire setter is difficult to detect or profile. Most children develop an early fascination with fire. The interest frequently begins when a child lights a match, either with or without parental permission or supervison.

Fascination with fire can culminate in firesetting by juveniles who do not fit the profile of a pyromaniac. According to information supplied by the National Firehawk Foundation, 20 percent of normal children between kindergarten and fourth grade have been involved in arson or firesetting. Most of the fires result from the child playing with matches. The children are not necessarily intellectually or socially inferior to their peers. But they tend to be more mischievious, disobedient, aggressive, or impulsive. They are not children with an uncontrollable urge to set fires repeatedly for the mere fun of seeing fire burn. For the most part they are children with specific behavioral or familial problems who can benefit from direct educational and psychological help.

Mr. Chairman, through the effort of this subcommittee and the efforts of organizations like the National Firehawk Foundation, juvenile firesetters can receive the necessary educational and psychological help. I commend your leadership again in dealing with the problem.

Thank you.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Denton.

We will now turn to John, age 16, accompanied by his mother, from northern California. We have extensive background, but I think we will turn at this point to John's mother for a brief statement as to the background of the situation and John's problem.

STATEMENT OF JOHN, ACCOMPANIED BY JOHN'S MOTHER, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA; AND BILL, ACCOMPANIED BY BILL'S MOTHER, WASHINGTON, DC, AREA

JOHN'S MOTHER. My son was an arsonist but he was not a criminal. He was filled with frustration, anger, and low self esteem. He needed help. He set the fires, then called the fire department, rescued the occupants, and assisted the best he could. He received the attention he craved, attention from male authority figures. He became a hero. He gained acceptance.

The courts decided to place him in a county residential treatment center. There was not an opening for 3 months. These months were spent in juvenile hall.

Here he learned to walk with his right foot on the white line when walking across campus. If not done properly, the boys were subjected to additional strip searches. He learned that if a counsel-

or was in a bad mood, the strip searches were increased, sometimes three a day.

Some boys were placed in a hole for minor infractions. The food was bad. Sometimes bugs were found in the food.

My son has emotional problems. These were not lessons he needed to learn. These are not the lessons to raise his self esteem or help him to control his impulses.

My son made good progress at the treatment facility. He was in a behavior modification cottage. But there are only 100 places in the school, and many kids do not have the opportunity to attend. The ones who do cannot always complete their work because there are so many waiting to get in.

Also there is no community support to help the boys readjust to society. There is no such program, such as the Firehawks, to work with him, no one to teach him about fire prevention, no one to befriend just him and to become his companion and confidant.

I do not want to institutionalize my son perhaps to have him lost in the endless shuffle of bureaucracy, lost in financial cutbacks to social services.

Since my son has been home, he has been studying horticulture with a woman who started a greenhouse project in a local jail. My son has benefited from this program. I see his joy when a seedling sprouts from a seed he has started. This increases his self esteem. He works hard and has much pride in the earth he cultivates.

He has become involved with the Firehawks. They will work to dispel my son's interest in setting fires. They will teach him fire prevention. They will work to help him perform in a socially acceptable manner in our community.

They have taken interest in him and in his future. They want to help him become a positive and contributing member of society.

These two programs are the type of support we were in need of. Hopefully this, in addition to psychological therapy, will aid my son in becoming emotionally healthy and productive. He need not be locked away as a criminal to walk that white line.

Thank you for taking the time to listen.

[The prepared statement of John's mother follows:]

Prepared Statement of John's Mother

My son was an arsonist. Hard to say, very hard for me to believe. My son started two fires at the boarding school he was attending, he started a fire at my house; it destroyed my home and business. My son was an arsonist but he was not a criminal. He was filled with frustration, anger, and low self-esteem. He needed help. Though I would have preferred that he tap me on the shoulder and say " Mom, I need help," the tool he used to express himself was setting fires. He set the fires and then called the fire department, rescued the occupants, and assisted the best he could. He received the attention he craved, attention from male authority figures. He became a hero. He gained acceptance.

After the fire in our home, he went to Southern California to stay with his Father. His Father and I decided to place him in a Residental Treatment Facility. Before this occurred he was arrested on another charge. The courts decided to place him in their County Residential Treatment Center. There was not an opening for three months. These months were spent in Juvenile Hall. Here he learned to walk with his right foot on the white line when moving across campus. If not done properly, the boys were subjected to additional strip searches. He learned that if a counselor was in a bad mood the strip searches were increased--sometimes there were three a day. Some boys were placed in the"hole" for minor infractions. The food was bad; sometime bugs were found in food. My son has emotional problems, these were not the lessons that he needed to learn. These are not the lessons to raise his self-esteem or help him to control his impulses.

My son made good progress at the treatment facility. He was in a behavior modification cottage. But, there are only 100 places in the school and many kids do not have the opportunity to attend. The ones who do cannot always complete their work because there are so many waiting to get in. Also, there is not community support

to help the boys readjust to society. There was no program such as the Firehawks to work with him. No one to teach him about fire-prevention, no one to befriend just him and to become his companion and confidant.

I was a single working Mother for many years. Though I worked from my home so I did not need to leave my children, I still worked many long hours. Families such as mine need more community support. We need a place to turn when we alone cannot fulfill the needs of our children. To me and of course most others, the family unit is very important. I do not want to institutionalize my son; to perhaps have him lost in the endless shuffle of bureaucracy. Lost to financial cut-backs to social services.

Since my son has been home he has been studying horticulture with a woman who started a greenhouse project for the prisoners in a local jail. My son (and also the prisoners) have benefitted from this program. I see his joy when a seedling sprouts from a seed he has nurtured. This increases his self-esteem. He works hard and has much pride in the earth he cultivates.

We have become involved with the Firehawks. They will work to disspell my son's interest in setting fires. They will teach him fire prevention. They will work to help him perform in a socially acceptable manner in our community. They have taken interest in him and in his future. They want to help him become a positive and contributing member of society.

These two programs are the type of support we were in need of. Hopefully, this in addition to psychological therapy will aid my son in becoming emotionally healthy and productive. He need not be locked away as a criminal to walk that white line.

Thank you for taking the time to listen.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much. We appreciate your coming forward. We know that it is not easy.

John, we would now like to hear from you.

Before you start, I think it appropriate to say that you are obviously here voluntarily. While we do not have to give you warnings of rights, I would like to say that anything anyone says at any time, including you, can be used against anybody.

So when you appear here and speak, I want you to know that you are doing so of your own free will and volition. You do not have to say anything if you do not want to because it could possibly incriminate you.

Do you understand what I said?

JOHN. Yes, sir.

Senator SPECTER. First of all, John, how old are you?

JOHN. Sixteen and a half.

Senator SPECTER. What happened to you?

STATEMENT OF JOHN

JOHN. In the past 1½ years I have set three fires, one to my house and two to my school. Between the years of 1982 to 1985 I had lots of problems with my family and myself. I felt I had no one to talk or turn to.

At school I started a fire in the utility closet. I waited for a few minutes. Then I rang the fire alarm and put the fire out with the fire extinguisher. I started to get attention. I was a hero, which made me feel good.

After I was home for 1 month I got mad at my mom and jealous of my brothers. I thought I should get more attention. I wanted to set a fire. I decided to set a fire in the back porch.

I poured some kerosene on the back porch and tried to light it six times, but it wouldn't light. Next, I poured some white gas and some regular gasoline on it and lit it. The house burnt down.

In January 1984 I was arrested for a different charge. I spent 3½ months in juvenile hall and 8½ in residential treatment. During the treatment I admitted to starting the fire. It was about 1 year after the fire.

I used to cry every night to think of all the damage I did. I went through a lot of pain for a year. And there are other people going through what I experienced and it hurts.

Now, the Firehawks are trying to help me, which makes me feel good. I feel the Firehawks and other such fire programs can help those people who really need the help. Kids my age do not want the help until it comes to them. I do not want anyone to go through what I have, even if that means me getting into the program to help these people.

These kids need help, and Firehawks can do it. How would you feel if your kids or kids you cared about have experienced what I have? Thank you.

[Statement follows:].

Prepared Statement of John

In the past one and one-half years I have set three fires. One to my house and two to my school. Between the years of 1982 and 1985 I had lots of problems with my family and myself. I felt I had no one to talk to or turn to.

I set two fires at my boarding school. A lot of people were mad at me because they thought I was lying to them. So I got angry and started a fire in the utility closet. I waited a few minutes then I rang the fire alarm and put the fire out with the fire extinguisher. I started to get attention. I was a hero which made me feel good. After awhile people started thinking I set the fire. So I got more angry and two weeks after the first fire I went into the supply room to start another fire. I set some matresses on fire with white gasoline. Then I went outside and played hero again; I helped put the fire out. It worked again. The next day we went on a week long field trip. When we got back I was sent home for firesetting. But I did not admit to the fires until ten days after the fires.

After I was home for one month I got mad at my Mom and jealous of my brothers. I thought I should get more attention. I wanted to set a fire. My first choice was the neighbor's house but it was made out of cement. My next choice was the tree in our backyard but it was raining. So I decided to set a small fire on the back porch. After my Mom left to take one of my brothers to a party I sent my other brother upstairs. Then I went and poured some kerosene on the back porch and tried to light it six times, but it wouldn't light.Next, I poured some white gas and regular gas on it and lit it. I went upstairs and looked out the window and saw the fire burning up to the roof. I called my little brother back downstairs. I went to the back porch which was

engulfed in flames. I sent my brother next door to call the fire department. He came back and said nobody was home. I sent him to the park across the street. I yelled for a friend across the street to call the fire department. A man stopped to help but then ten gallons of kerosene exploded and three sides and the roof of the house were on fire. We ran across the street to the park. The fire department arrived. I asked my little brother if he saw the two guys that did it. He said "Yes," so I asked him what they looked like. My Mom came home to a burning house and started to cry so I started to cry. I wanted to go up and say " Put the handcuffs on me, I did it," but I was too scared. Instead I said I saw the guys who did it. When the police arrived they separated me from my brother to ask our descriptions. I used my brother's story to keep me out of trouble. I don't know where he got his story from. After the fire was out I was let out of the police car. I looked at the house and saw we lost everything we had. I went to a friend's house for the rest of the day.

The next day, one of my brothers and I went to my father's house in Southern California. In January of 1984 I was arrested for a different charge. I spent three and one half months in Juvenile Hall then eight and one half months in Residential Treatment. During the treatment I admitted to setting the fire; it was about one year after the fire. I used to cry everynight thinking of all the damage I did. I went through a lot of pain for a year. And there are other people going through what I experienced and it hurts. Now the Firehawks are trying to help me which makes me feel good. I feel the Firehawks and othe such fire programs can help those people who really need the help. Kids my age do not want the help until it comes to them. I don't want <u>anyone</u> to go through what I have, even if that means me getting into the programs to help these people.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much.

John, we will have a few questions for you in a moment or two. But first I would like to turn to Bill and his mother, residents of the Washington, DC area. Bill is age 14. I thank you for joining us.

We will call you Bill's mother and look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF BILL'S MOTHER

BILL'S MOTHER. Thank you. Thank you for this honor and privilege you have given me this morning, so I can tell you briefly the events that led me to enter my son into the Firehawk Program and how he has benefited since then.

In January of 1983 my husband deserted the family home without any prior warning or notice. We had always been a close family with four children, so this was very devastating to not only me but also my children.

My son's father, who at one time was a very caring and a responsible person, soon became a total stranger to us. My son could not handle this lack of attention and rejection.

In September of 1983 I was forced to go to work due to the lack of financial support. I had to leave the children at home for the first time without any adult to supervise, because I could not afford to have anyone to care for them.

I never realized how much my children were hurting until one day after immediately arriving at work, I was told to call my son at home. When I called, he told me, mom, you have to come home, there has been a fire at the house. I rushed home from work without knowing what to expect when I arrived.

Upon my arrival, I met the gentleman who extinguished the fire and called the fire department. He demanded an investigation. Fortunately, the only damage to my home was the front shrubbery. He felt it had been set deliberately, because next to the bushes was a charred Sunday paper.

The man who put out the fire waited until the fire inspector arrived. He gave the inspector the details of what he saw as he shuffled through the debris. After surveying the damage to my property, the fire inspector asked to talk to me.

He showed me the evidence he found, which also included a book of matches from a wedding we had been to previously. He then informed me that he felt my son had started the fire. Needless to say, I was shocked and dismayed to think that my son could do such a thing. After he convinced me of the evidence he had found, I had no choice but to believe it.

He agreed not to press charges, but strongly urged that I enroll my son in the Firehawk Program, which was just beginning in the area.

A couple of days later, a social worker from the fire department came to our house to interview my son and also his older brother who I felt also was feeling a lack of attention. The social worker told my sons that he would match them with a firefighter who has the same interests and dislikes of themselves.

Within a couple of weeks he called me and asked were we interested in big brothers for my sons.

I can't begin to tell you what a blessing this has been for me and my sons. These men have fulfilled a tremendous gap in my sons' lives. These firefighters are caring, loving, and responsible individuals who have found the time to talk to them when they especially need a father figure.

They have also spent many hours taking my sons to ball games and other outings. My sons were very disappointed to learn that they could not continue in the Firehawk Program due to the lack of funding.

As much as it has helped them, I still feel they need to continue in this program. Therefore, I strongly recommend that funding be made available to the Firehawks.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you, thank you very much.

Bill, you heard what I had to say to John about any statements that you make in this proceeding.

You are 14?

BILL. Yes.

Senator SPECTER. So that we do appreciate your being here and telling us about your experiences as a possible help to lead us to find ways to deal with the issue. But I think it is necessary to tell you that whenever anybody says anything, under any circumstances, it is incriminating, that is if it says something about an offense or crime, it could possibly be used against that person at some other proceeding. I just want you to know that.

Of course your mother is here with you and you are not under any obligation to say anything. But do you understand generally what I have said to you?

BILL. Yes.

Senator SPECTER. Are you willing to tell us what happened to you?

BILL. Yes.

Senator SPECTER. Go ahead.

STATEMENT OF BILL

BILL. I was invited here today to talk to you about my encounter with fire starting. It happened in December 1983 in the morning when I was waiting to go to school. I had seen my brother setting little fires in our garage and around our house.

Since I had seen him do it, I thought it would be OK if I did the same thing. I do not know exactly why I started the fire. Some people think it was to gain attention from my father who hadn't been living in the house for several months.

After I set the fire, I quickly ran outside the house because I had seen a truck pullover in front of the house. I was walking in circles frantically trying to think of what to say to the man putting out the fire.

A moment later another man pulled over to assist in putting out the flames. Immediately he ran to the door and banged several times screaming "fire, fire." As I opened the door, I saw the two men pouring antifreeze on the flames. But it just had been started on a newspaper and was now climbing to the bushes in front of our house.

After the fire was under control, the men asked me if my parents were home. I told them I could call my mom at work. As my mom arrived home, the man from the fire department pulled up to investigate the fire, after one or two men demanded that there be an investigation.

It was time for me to go to school. As I arrived back home from school that day, I found a man involved with the investigations in front of the family and my mom, all seated at the table waiting for me. I put my books down and began to do my homework when I was told to come into the dining room.

The investigator asked me if I had seen the pack of matches that he was holding. And I told him no. What I did not know was that he already realized that I had set the fire.

He talked with me and finally got me to tell the truth. He talked to me about the seriousness of the incident and what could have happened to me and the house. I was lucky nobody got hurt and the house was not damaged luckily because of the two men that put out the fire.

Next, after a few days my mom was notified by the fire chief's wife. She informed my mom of a group that she and a few other people were trying to organize. It was called Firehawks. After talking to my mom several times a date was set to meet our partners in this program.

They were firemen that had been paired up with us according to our likes and dislikes. We got a chance to meet with them, learn and talk about ourselves. Now, I go with my Firehawk partner to several places, such as boating, ball games, fishing, bowling, and many other exciting places.

I really feel that this program is beneficial to kids that do not have a father living in the house or kids who just need a little more attention or listening to.

I have gone to meetings with other kids in the program, I have seen movies and slides on the seriousness and dangers of setting fires. In the group that I am now in, there is a slide presentation on false alarms to help other kids with their problems.

This program has really taught me not to play with fire because of the results.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Bill.

Going back to the time that you set the fire, what went through your mind at the time you were doing it, as best you can recall?

BILL. I guess anger.

Senator SPECTER. Anger?

BILL. Yes.

Senator SPECTER. What kind of anger, anger at whom?

BILL. Myself.

Senator SPECTER. I'm sorry?

BILL. Myself.

Senator SPECTER. Angry at your folks for anything special that they had done?

BILL. Yes.

Senator SPECTER. Like what?

BILL. Breaking up.

Senator SPECTER. Were you angry at your father who had left?

BILL. Yes.

Senator SPECTER. Why did you choose to light the fire as a means of expressing that anger, Bill, if you are able to explain it to us?

BILL. Sort of curiosity.

Senator SPECTER. Curiosity. You wanted to see what would happen?

BILL. Yeah.

Senator SPECTER. Were you looking for attention?

BILL. No.

Senator SPECTER. Did you think you would get attention?

BILL. No.

Senator SPECTER. Well, you did not think it would go unnoticed; did you?

BILL. Excuse me?

Senator SPECTER. You did not think the fire would go unnoticed; did you?

BILL. No.

Senator SPECTER. Is that the only fire that you have ever ignited?

BILL. Yes.

Senator SPECTER. You were not thinking for just a minute?

BILL. Yeah.

Senator SPECTER. What have your experiences been with the firefighters? You say you have had a relationship with them. They have befriended you, taken you bowling, that sort of thing?

BILL. Yes.

Senator SPECTER. What have you gotten out of that exactly, as best you can tell us?

BILL. Got a chance to go places and do things now I did not get to do before.

Senator SPECTER. Have you had conversations with your mother about your problem and ways that you might cope with it or deal with it?

BILL. Yeah. We would go to group sessions and talk about it.

Senator SPECTER. Do you think there is any chance you might cause a fire to be lit at any time in the future?

BILL. No.

Senator SPECTER. Do you think you are finished with that?

BILL. Yes.

Senator SPECTER. Are you sure?

BILL. Yes.

Senator SPECTER. John, let us turn to you, if you would take the microphones for a moment.

You said you had lit three fires. You had problems with your family and you were seeking attention when your house burned down. When did you light the first fire?

JOHN. The first fire was at my boarding school in 1983.

Senator SPECTER. So you were about 14 at that time?

JOHN. Yes, sir.

Senator SPECTER. At the time you lit the first fire, as nearly as you can recollect, what was going through your mind?

JOHN. At the boarding school I went to, there was a lot of people who thought I was lying to them. And they were getting angry at me, a lot of people not giving me attention, just leaving me alone, not being my friends. And that was getting me real angry.

And I got angry and depressed. And I did not know what to do. So I turned to firesetting.

Senator SPECTER. And when you lit the second fire, what were you thinking about? What was going through your mind as nearly as you can recollect?

JOHN. Well, after the first fire I was kind of like a hero.

Senator SPECTER. People knew you had lit the fire?

JOHN. No, they did not know.

Senator SPECTER. Why did they treat you as a hero?

JOHN. Because I helped put out the fire and I was kind of like a hero to them.

Senator SPECTER. So you lit the fire so you could then put it out and be a hero?

JOHN. Get attention. And after the first fire people started recognizing me more. And then a couple weeks went by and people said I think he lit the fire, I think he is the one that did it. That got me more angry, and that is when I lit the second fire.

Senator SPECTER. You talk about problems with your family. Would you elaborate on what those were.

JOHN. When I was at home, I was in the program, I would not do what my mother wanted me to do, what my mother said. I would go out when I wanted, I would just do what I wanted all the time.

Senator SPECTER. How about your father?

JOHN. My father and my mom have been divorced about 13 years. And I communicate with him sometimes but not too much.

Senator SPECTER. What kind of help have you gotten after you have had this experience lighting fires?

JOHN. I was in the residential treatment in California, and they gave me help there. And what had happened in the past is I used to hold my feelings in, my anger, would not be able to talk to my family. But now I can talk to people, tell people how I feel. If I get angry, I can tell them that. If I need attention, I can tell people I have the problem.

Senator SPECTER. Do you think this problem is behind you?

JOHN. Not 100 percent, but a lot of it is.

Senator SPECTER. John, if you were to give advice to another young man, 14, 15, 16 like you who has a feeling about wanting to light fires, what would you tell that young man?

JOHN. I would tell them it is not worth it. I went through a lot of pain for over a year. And I ruined my family. I was away from my family for over a year and a half. It is just not a good choice.

Senator SPECTER. Bill, if you were to give advice to another 14 year old who might be considering lighting a fire to gain attention, what would you tell that person?

BILL. It is very serious.

Senator SPECTER. Very serious?

BILL. Yeah, the results.

Senator SPECTER. Senator Denton.

Senator DENTON. I have no questions for this panel, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to commend the boys and their mothers for having the good will which exceeds the tendency toward embarrassment to come forward and testify today. It takes a lot of courage. All of us make mistakes. If we would just come forward in one form or an-

other and acknowledge the mistake and tell about the lessons we learn from them, we could help a lot of other people avoid the same mistakes.

Again I congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, for your leadership role in this area.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Denton.

Thank you very much, John, John's mother, Bill, and Bill's mother. We know that it is not easy to come forward. And the message which you have given today I think will be helpful in spreading the word to others who might be similarly disposed and gives us some insights into the kind of problem and what we might be trying do about it. So thank you very much.

I would like now to call Chief Fire Marshal, David Aron, Camden County, NJ.; Dian W. Clark, clinical specialist in psychiatry; Clifford L. Karchmer, research scientist, law and justice study center, if you would come forward.

Senator DENTON. Mr. Chairman, I must go to the floor at this time. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to participate in today's hearing.

Senator SPECTER. I understand your commitments and your pressures, Senator Denton. We appreciate your being here for as long as you have been able to stay.

Chief Aron we very much appreciate your being with us. We know of your extensive experience in the Camden County fire service and the personal expertise you have developed with the problem of juvenile arson. We thank you for being here and look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF DAVID G. ARON, CHIEF FIRE MARSHAL, CAMDEN COUNTY, NJ

Chief Marshal ARON. Thank you for the invitation, Senator.

I would like to thank the chairman for allowing me to provide written testimony on the record concerning juvenile fire setters.

Senator SPECTER. All of the written statements will be made a part of the record in full, as is our practice, with an effort to summarize as much as possible, leaving the maximum amount of time for questions and answers.

Chief Marshal ARON. Camden County is a county located on the Jersey side of the Delaware River from Philadelphia. It is approximately 220 square miles. We have a population of about 625,000 people.

The fire service consists of 85 fire companies located in 87 stations, approximately 3,000 volunteer firefighters with a career force of about 450, the biggest majority of them located in the city of Camden.

Over the years we have been kind of increasingly involved in the juvenile firesetting record in our country. Last year the county responded tc over 22,000 fire calls. We estimated approximately 75 or 100 of these calls were juvenile related incidents, or just over 34 percent.

Since 1979 we have investigated 96 fire deaths in Camden County. Twenty two percent of these deaths resulted from juveniles playing with fire. We have many facts and figures concerning each

and every category of the firesetting that you have heard here today, some of the extreme cases down to the children experimenting with matches and cigarette lighters, and things like that.

They range in age from 3 and 4 years all the way up until they are in their teens on the firesetting. We even had a 4-year-old that set a fire in his grandparents' house resulting in the deaths of the grandparents. When questioning the youth, he admitted that he wanted to set the fire to kill his grandparents.

He was one of the youngest we had charged in the county, and not so much for an incarceration period but to seek some mental health for the people.

Senator SPECTER. What happened to that 4-year-old, Chief?

Chief Marshal ARON. He was placed into some mental health programs.

Senator SPECTER. At the age of four?

Chief Marshal ARON. Yes.

Senator SPECTER. He was angry at his grandparents and deliberately tried to kill them?

Chief Marshal ARON. What he did was he took a cigarette lighter and lit the bottom of a sofa. And the ensuing smoke suffocated the grandparents.

Senator SPECTER. Proceed.

Chief Marshal ARON. We became involved in finding some sort of a program for our juvenile fire setters. And we looked around and we saw the National Firehawk Program. We sent for information on it.

We test piloted the program at end of last year, October, November, December, in which we took several juveniles into that program for the evaluation process. In February of 1985 we became a national affiliate of the program.

We expected approximately 50 children to be involved in the program in the course of a year. Since the start of our program, we have had over 45 referrals into the system already. It is quite taxing on our office to handle this amount of activity in the office, as you can appreciate.

Cost wise we just finished our first training program of the level two child companion for fire setter companion, which has been brought out in testimony. We have approximately 17 people that have finished the training program that act as companions for some of these juveniles. We have 10 juveniles now awaiting the assignment of the companions.

One of the areas that we are concerned about is the cost of this. The first session, the first training session, was done by volunteer mental health people. They informed us that this would no longer be on a volunteer basis, and that they would be looking to be paid for their time and efforts and training for this.

So, this is going to be another problem for us in developing future companions for the program as they must go through a fairly intensified training program.

The next problem that we have been running into is the staff time to handle each child coming through our office. It takes approximately 4 hours on a preliminary visit for the student at whatever level we determine him to be. It involves more commitment

and follow up obviously from our staff. And leading into excessive areas of staff commitment.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Aron follows:]

Prepared Statement of David G. Aron

Thank you Mr. Chairman for this opportunity to provide written testimony for the record on Juvenile Firesetters.

The Camden County Fire Marshal Office, located in Southern New Jersey, services an area of 222 square miles with a population of about 650,000. The Camden County Fire Service consists of 85 Fire Company's operating out of 87 fire stations. Manpower consists of approximately 3,000 volunteer firefighters and a career force of 450.

Over the years, the Camden County Fire Marshal Office has become increasingly concerned about the involvement of juvenile's in fire incidents. The Camden County Fire Service responds to an average of 22,000 fire calls a year. This Office estimates juvenile involvement in approximately 7,500 of these incidents. These incidents include dwellings, vacant buildings, and brush fires as well as false alarms. To recap these figures, just over 34% of all responses the Camden County Fire Services answer, are juvenile related. Camden County stats show that with the investigation of 96 fire deaths from 1979 to date, 22% resulted from juveniles playing with fire.

Mr. Chairman, we ask you to keep in mind that these figures do not reflect the child who has not come to the attention of the Fire Service. The child who is just experimenting with fire, and whose firesetting behavior will intensify if allowed to go unchecked.

In the year 1983, the Camden County Fire Marshal Office had the unpleasant task of investigating two (2) fire deaths which directly had resulted from juvenile's playing with fire. On January 12, 1984, this Office investigated a fatal fire which claimed the life of a 9 month old child caused by his 5 year old brother playing with a cigarette lighter. Another 9 month old child fell victim to a fire on March 6, 1984 started by her 3 year old sister who was playing with a lighter. Sadly, the investigation revealed the child had a past history of playing with fire. Once again, on September 15, 1984, an 18 month old child died as a result of his 5 year old brother playing with a lighter.

The above mentioned fires were listed as accidental with this Office, however, we have experienced premeditated acts of fires which have resulted in deaths. These premeditated fires have been carried out by children as young as 4 years of age.

From these few cases along, I am sure you can sympathize on just how frustrating the problem of juvenile firesetters can be for the Fire Service. The Fire Service has recognized Fire Prevention Education as its best weapon against needless tragic fires. However, with juvenile involvement on the increase, it was becoming very clear that Fire Prevention Education was not enough. Until Camden County Board of Freeholders adopted a comprehensive Juvenile Firesetter Program (Firehawk's), under the recommendation of Freeholder Joseph Roberts and this Office, the approach of the Fire Service was done on a hit or miss basis. Often a juvenile who came to the attention of the Fire Service as a firesetter received a lecture from his local Fire Chief. Little or no follow-up was ever done to ascertain if the lecture curtailed the firesetting behavior. On the other side of the slate, the juvenile's who were apprehended and entered the Juvenile Justice System were discovered repeating their acts. It was obvious the System was not working.

The Camden County Fire Marshal Office works closely with the Camden County Prosecutor's Office in an organized Arson Task Force method. Premeditated acts of arson by juveniles proved to be indications that a more coordinated approach should be taken involving the Mental Health field in addressing the problem of juvenile arson.

On January 22, 1980, Investigators from the Camden County Fire Marshal and Prosecutor's Offices encountered a 4 your old boy who had set fire to a sofa while his grandparents slept. Investigation revealed that the boy felt he was unjustly punished by his grandmother.

On January 18, 1981, Investigator's from the previously mentioned Offices, responded to a fire that claimed the lives of three (3) and critically injured another. This fire was intentionally set by a 7 year old. Investigator's learned that the boy shared a bedroom with his mother and her live-in boyfriend. Apparently unable to cope with this situation emotionally, the child acted out his resentment of this situation by setting fire to the bed his mother and boyfriend shared. Many other such cases showed even laymen, that severe emotional and psychological problems play a substantial role in the behavior of these juvenile firesetters.

The Camden County Fire Marshal Office and Prosecutor's Office welcomed the development of the National Firehawk Juvenile Firesetter's Program. The Firehawk Program provided Camden County with a vehicle to coordinate the Fire Service, the Juvenile Justice System, and the Mental Health community. Now instead of individual agencies working independantly, a comprehensive team approach exists to help combat the problem.

In order to maximize the use of expertise within the County's Mental Health field, Camden County Freeholder and County Firehawk Advisory Board member Joseph Roberts, coordinated two (2) of the County's Mental Health Agencies to serve as referral sources for the juvenile's and their families who were in need of family therapy. In February of this year, the Camden County Fire Marshal Office felt that with the Mental Health Referral Network in place, we were ready to announce the existance of the Program to the residents of Camden County.

Mr. Chairman, the initial response from the community resulted in 41 referral's in just over 60 days. This reception far exceeded the expectations of the Fire Marshal Office. In a short period of time, we encountered juveniles with severe firesetting problems. One juvenile had a history of playing with fire at least 3 times a day for 2 years including putting lighter fluid on his arms and igniting it. Other cases that entered this Office was a family of 2 boys age 8 and 6 with a sister age 12. It was learned that while unattended, the boys were lighting fires in the home on a daily basis. These fires included coffee tables, setting fire to the carpet as well as clothing in closets. After the family entered counselling, it was also determined the daughter was suicidal. Yet another juvenile age 7, who had set his bedroom on fire had his life threatened by his mother because of his long-term firesetting behavior. The mother also suicidal, had threatened to take her life along with her children. Also referred to our Program were 2 boys age 15 and 16, who fire bombed the home of another boy they were having a problem with at school. That incident resulted in the burn injury of one of the occupants of the home.

The volume and the type of firesetters the Camden County Program is encountering has made us keenly aware that juvenile firesetting is occurring in such proportions as to easily overwhelm the Fire Marshal Office as well as an already overburdened Mental Health community. Working on a limited budget, the Camden County Fire Marshal Office is manned by a fulltime Staff of 5 men. Duties include investigations of all suspicious and fatal fires occurring within the County as well as inspections of over 200 County buildings which include special inspection requests received from the community. In addition to these functions, this Office also provides Fire Prevention Programs to the residents of Camden County throughout the year, in addition to providing Fire Prevention and Firefighting Programs to various Industries within the County. The Camden County Fire Marshal Office also coordinates a complete Emergency Training Center which trains over 6,000 Emergency Response Personnel from the various emergency services in the County.

This Office is now finding it is investing over 40 manhours per week in the administration of the Firesetter Program. Where once we asked the question of "What can we do to address the problem of juvenile arson?" we now find ourselves faced with another frustrating question that is Will we be able to continue to devote the manpower time and expenditures that this problem is requiring?".

In the Fire Service, we are accustomed to responding to emergencies rapidly. The Camden County Fire Marshal Office is concerned that without proper funding for a Comprehensive Juvenile Firesetter Program such as the one we have adopted, we will become victims of an overwhelming demand to help these children. The results we fear will be a slow response on our part to come to their aid. Unfortunately, we must realize a slow response to a child who is involved in playing with fire can be tragic. For adults, fire is a powerful tool, to a child it is often a deadly toy. We would like to treat the child firesetter the same way we handle any other emergency request from our communities with quick, deliberate action. The children and the community deserve nothing less.

Thus far our search for funds has been less than encouraging. Solicitations from Insurance Company's have resulted in no funds received to date. Fund-raising efforts by dedicated firefighter volunteers has resulted in some funds (approximately $300.00) which will be used to support our Companion Program. This is a feature unique to Firehawks, which pairs a juvenile firesetter with a trained volunteer companion firefighter. This firefighter serves as a long-term role model for the child. Currently we have 8 children awaiting companions. Funds received offset the expense the companion incurs for taking his child to a ballgame, circus, or any other activity in which the volunteer companion has a cash outlay. We feel that our largest need for funding will be in the administration of the Program which includes extensive training of Companion volunteers, including psychological testing which can range up to $300.00 per Companion. Other administration costs include the cost of conducting the firesetter interview and evaluation, the cost of reviewing the results of that interview, and determing the appropriate intervention program for child and his family. We must recognize the cost of long-term therapy for the child and family which may be needed. Additional costs include Preforming Follow-ups on a regular basis. The Camden County Fire Marshal Office feels that funding

for this Program on a grant type basis is vital if we are going to be able to continue to serve our community with a responsive, effective program.

Such a grant earmarked for the administration of the Juvenile Firesetters Program could allow this Office to confront the juvenile firesetting problem in a efficient responsive manner. For example; it would make it possible to create a fulltime position devoted entirely to the Juvenile Firesetter Program. Ideally, it could be someone with a strong background in the area of mental health who could be responsible for conducting all of the previously mentioned administration functions. In turn, this would give the Office an additional 40 plus hours a week to put an Investigator out in the field to investigate fires and identify juvenile involvement. It is hoped that as a result of this testimony, this Sub-Committee will recognize the very real need for funds that exist to continue this Program.

Mr. Chairman, as a result of initiating the Program, we have observed some other areas of concern. One such problem is the lack of Mental Health facilities willing to treat juvenile firesetters on a long-term inpatient basis. It seems that a genuine fear exists within the Mental Health community to house a firesetter. We recognize the need for specialized treatment and care for the child firesetter and would welcome research that would result in the development of a Half-way House or other facility which would provide the proper treatment on a long-term basis to these children.

Secondly, we feel that National statistics on the problem of the juvenile firesetting problem fall far short of the reality of the problem. This is another reason we welcome the Firehawk Program because it is a National Program. It is our feeling that Law Enforcement Agencies and the Fire Service take a closer look at the juvenile firesetting problem.

It is hoped that the Mental Health Network, Law Enforcement, and the Fire Service be strongly encouraged to maintain records and accumulate and distribute statistical information on the number of juvenile fire related incidents.

In closing Mr. Chairman, we feel we can speak for the Fire Service as a whole when we again thank you and all Members of this Sub-Committee for your interest and concern in the area of juvenile arson. Chief Aron would like to extend to the Members of this Sub-Committee an invitation to visit the Camden County Fire Marshal Office in order to observe the juvenile firesetting problem on a first-hand basis.

Thank you.

*Some statistics quoted in this report have been taken from yearly reports issued by the Camden County Fire Marshal Office.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much.

We would now turn to Dian Clark, a clinical specialist in psychiatry, for Lower Bucks County Hospital, consultant to the Philadelphia fire department on recognition and interviewing of juvenile fire setters.

We very much appreciate your joining us today and look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF DIAN W. CLARK, CLINICAL SPECIALIST IN PSYCHIATRY, LOWER BUCKS HOSPITAL, BUCKS COUNTY, PA

Ms. CLARK. Thank you, Senator. It is a pleasure to appear at this hearing today.

As a mental health professional, consultant to various fire and police departments, and chairperson of the newly formed committee in Philadelphia designed to study and implement probable programs regarding firesetting children and juveniles, I applaud your desire to focus attention on this problem of national concern.

It has become increasingly apparent over the past number of years that the children and youth brought to my attention suffer many times from severe pathology, which makes them a risk to themselves, their family, and to the community at large. Often these children have gone beyond the point where support services such as big brother prototypes which exist now would be of any benefit to them.

Instead, they are in need of inpatient treatment, generally for some extended period of time, or a highly structured outpatient treatment which would include family therapy.

Unfortunately, there are few facilities available for these children for inpatient care. And I suggest that almost nothing exists outside of the juvenile justice system for firesetting teens.

Children in need of tremendous therapeutic interaction often find themselves with no place to go. Little is known about effective treatment modalities for fire setters, and there are few programs available throughout the country which are recognized as providing quality care in this area.

Let us join together in our efforts to not only focus attention on this most serious issue but to move forward in the development of research programs designed to determine the most beneficial treatment modalities for these children in crisis.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Clark follows:]

Prepared Statement of Dian W. Clark

The serious problem of fire-setting in children and youth seems, at last, to have captured the attention and interest of the general public, fire personnel, and mental health professionals. According to recent data, over 1/2 of the arson related fires reported in this country are set by juveniles 18 and under; of that number 1/3 are set by children under the age of 15. These figures can only be viewed as estimates, however, due to an inadequate or perhaps non-existant national data gathering service.

Until recently, only the most obvious and dangerous fire-setters were credited with truly setting purposeful fires. Children who may have had extensive fire-setting histories were dismissed as "playing with matches" or as "curious". That fire-setting could be a manifestation of serious emotional conflict was often not considered.

Children who were/are seen as significant risks to themselves, their families, and society seem generally to fall into 2 primary age groups: 6-9 and 11-15. These ages indicate peaks in fire-setting periods for children who express troubled or conflicted emotions through the mechanism of fire.

Often the fire-setting is the last in a steadily progressive series of asocial behaviors during which intercession either didn't work or was not offered by adults. These children may begin as early as 3 or 4 to set fires which become larger and more dangerous as the child grows and expands his mobility. The fire-setting itself is many times not seen as a response to some emotional problem, but often as an extension of the child's "bad" behavior.

As a mental health professional, this writer wishes to emphasize that fire-setters seem to use fire as a

"last resort" behavior when other means of expressing conflict have not led to resolution. Along the continum of the child's asocial behavior the historian could expect to find problems in school with attention, hyperactivity, lack of friends, poor grades, truancy, and defiance. At home, the child is perceived as lonely, "bad", unresponsive to correction or discipline, and untrustworthy.

Fire-setters seem, in general, to come from disturbed families although this is not always the case. The adults in the home are often troubled themselves, either undergoing some crisis or with long-standing histories of emotional problems. Many fire-setting children seem to come from homes where the adult male is either absent or, if present, is unresponsive, apathetic or overly punitive. Many times, fire is in response to or in relation to abuse the child has experienced over an extended period of time and for which he perceives no relief.

Most reported juvenile fire-setters are male although some girls are reported as well. Boys indicate a high incidence of bed-wetting, cruelty to animals, severe allergies and hyperactivity as part of their personality profile.

Children set fires for various reasons: some to cover acts of vandalism, others to promote status among peers, still others for attention or due to some psychotic process. The children this paper focuses on however are those with extensive fire-setting histories of 3 or more fires or those who have set one major fire resultant in significant property loss, death or injury to themselves or others. These children seem to use fire-setting to express homocidal, or suicidal fantasies towards a world in which they feel overwhelmed.

BELOW PLEASE FIND AN OVERVIEW OF CASES OF FIRE-SETTING CHILDREN AND JUVENILES WHICH HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO ME WITHIN THE LAST TWO YEARS FOR CONSULTATION AND REFERRAL.

10 year old male who set three significant fires within the month of May, all within his apartment complex. He had been kidnapped as an infant, and withheld from his mother for a number of months. He had a significant history of hyperactivity and enuresis. He was referred through Fire Prevention Department for treatment. His mother refused to have him seen.

---

12 year old female set a waste basket on fire in her bedroom which then developed into a fully involved fire and destroyed her house. The child has a history of hyperactivity and learning disabilities. She had never received treatment for either of the above. This was her first fire. She was referred to out-patient treatment.

---

14 year old male who has set a series of significant fires. At the age of 7, he burned down his house. At the age of 12, he burned down his grandmother's house, and at 14 he set fire to his bedroom. He had been seen by Fire Prevention and referred to me. He had been seen in out-patient program at the age of 7. His mom said that "it hadn't helped". He has additionally set many small fires from the age of 7 through the age of 14 and had burned himself a number of times. He has a history of hyperactivity is a school behavior problem, and has learning disabilities as well. Referred to child psychiatrist.

---

8 year old girl with a history of fire setting since the age of 4 and an existing history of child abuse by uncle,

killed two of her step-sisters in a fire this past February. She has never received treatment for the fire setting or as a result of having been abused. She was turned over to the Child Protection Services by the Fire Marshall's Office

---

7 year old male with a 4 year history of abuse and neglect, and a 3 year history of fire setting, set fire to his house and seriously burned his mother and two step-sisters. He stated that he was trying to kill his mother and would continue to set fires until he was successful. He has a history of hyperactivity and inattentativeness in school. He was referred for inpatient treatment and is currently a long-term patient at a children's psychiatric hospital.

---

9 year old male who burned down his house 2½ years ago, and set other minor fires from the age of 5 years. Has a history of being sexually abused by a member of his family. Is hyperactive and destructive. Currently is lighting matches on fire and holding them up to his younger brother's face in an attempt to set him on fire. This child is significant in that when he was seen on March 8, 1985, he was considered to be a severe homocidal risk, and there were no hospital beds available in the city of Philadelphia which would accept him because of his significant history of fire setting. Through an arduous process, which took 27 phone calls in total, he was finally placed in Childrens' Services and is still hospitalized today, (April, 1985).

---

6 year old male with a 2 year history of fire-setting, set fire to a friend's bedroom, has a related history of hyperactivity and enuresis, has been referred to private therapist.

---

9 year old male with a long history of fire setting since age 4. At the age of 4, he burned his sister by setting

fire to her clothes. She sustained third degree burns and major scarring. He has a history of burning animals and has set a number of small school fires. He has a history of possible abuse, and is currently in a Special Education Program in school because he is both learning disabled, and has problems with socially acceptable behaviour. He is known as both "a liar and thief" by school officials. He has been referred to out-patient treatment and is currently being evaluated for inpatient treatment.

---

10 year old male with a long 6 year history of fire-setting, who has expressed serious intent to kill both his parents by burning them to death, has an associated history of learning disabilities and asocial behavior. Referred to juvenile authorities and outpatient treatment.

---

10 year old male began playing with matches two years ago. Currently is lighting papers from the gas stove and throwing them around the kitchen. He has been in out-patient treatment for asocial behavior and was referred back to his out-patient therapist.

---

7 year old male who has a two year history of fire-setting, and who has set 3 significant fires resulting in property damage in his house and in his aunt's home. Has an associated history of hyperactivity and poor school performance. Was referred to out-patient therapy.

---

6 year old male who has 3 year history of fire-setting, who set a fire to his house and burned it down this past Christmas. Has a history of hyperactivity, enuresis and cruelty to animals. He has never been seen in treatment. His mother refused treatment services for him.

The above is an overview of the cases which cross my desk and should serve as a sampling of the kinds of children who become involved with fire-setting as a pathological progression of some associated mental illness or expression of severe psychological problems in which fire-setting becomes symptomatic of internal stress.

Please note that these children are a representative sampling of all socio-economic ethnic groups and do not reflect a skew towards one segment of the population or another.

As one considers the problems inherent in this kind of child at risk in the community, a number of factors must be addressed:

1. There is no systematic method of identifying the childhood fire-setter . Fire departments throughout the country use personal discretion in evaluating dangerousness in "playing with matches". Fire personnel generally are not trained as expert observers of abnormal childhood behavior and often don't recognize pathology. It has been this writer's experience, however, to discover that fire personnel are extremely anxious to learn whatever they can about juvenile fire-setters and what can be done for them. Although there are questionnaires and guidelines available to fire departments for interviewing children, the determination of significant pathology is still many times unclearly defined.
2. The state in which the writer lives and works (PA) has no state-wide system for accurate data collection of fires started by juveniles. This lack of information, therefore, cannot accurately

portray the seriousness of children and fire. Some communities report all juvenile fires, others report only if a felony crime has been committed. PA is only 1 of the majority of states which has no accurate determination of fire loss due to children.

3. Public education of parents, teachers, mental health professionals, fire personnel, and juvenile justice is essential. Teaching people to recognize the signs of what they are seeing is the first step in prevention and treatment of juvenile fire-setters. Many communities have little or no educational opportunities. Children with fire-setting behaviors often go unrecognized until they become so seriously at risk, the juvenile justice system becomes involved and the child is sometimes lost to treatment.
4. The treatment of childhood fire-setters is complex and intricate. Children involved in fire-play have learned to utilize fire rather than language to communicate a host of emotions such as rage, frustration, fear, embarrassment and depression. They have developed an association between fire-starting and relief from unbearable tension - fires become a way of coping with life. Therapy is vital to uncover the conflicts the child is experiencing and to help him discover alternative behaviors which are healthy and safe. Children who set fires are a family problem - they often act out issues caused by a family in turmoil. When that happens, the family must be treated. The child cannot respond to treatment in a vacuum.

In conclusion, the problem of juvenile fire-starters must be addressed on a number of levels:

1. Public education programs are necessary to inform the public of the seriousness of fire-setting behavior and to help provide options for obtaining help for children in need.
2. School boards should be encouraged to work in coordination with Fire Prevention Departments to provide information to teachers and school counselors about the importance of early intervention for juvenile fire-setters.
3. Inservice Education Programs should be available to train mental health professionals in the recognition and treatment of the child fire-setter.
4. Fire department personnel should be instructed in techniques for interviewing children. They also should be provided with assessment/evaluation tools which are readily available and easy to use.
5. A national data collection service which would be responsible for determining actual numbers of fires started, property loss, death and/or injury caused by juveniles should be developed. This information is vital to determining the impact of intervention programs, treatment centers, and areas of great concern for concentrated prevention efforts.
6. Finally, this writer wishes to propose a newly-designated treatment center specifically for the treatment of juvenile fire-starters. This facility would offer both inpatient and out-patient care and provide both individual and family treatment. At this time, no facility outside of juvenile justice exists for the treatment of children or adolescents responsible for setting fires.

One of the major concerns which confronts this writer is the lack of inpatient treatment programs for the population, particularly after the onset of puberty. All of the education and statistical data generated will be of little value without available treatment.

Let us do what we can to insure proper intervention diagnosis and treatment of fire-setters; with a facility designed for these children; research into effective therapeutic interaction would be of inordinate value to the child, the family and the community.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much Ms. Clark. We appreciate your words.

I would like now to turn to Mr. Clifford Karchmer, who is adjunct professor at the School of Justice at the American University here in Washington. He has been a leading authority on arson and juvenile involvement, and has authored numerous publications and technical reports on arsons, particularly juvenile arsons, and related crime issues.

STATEMENT OF CLIFFORD L. KARCHMER, RESEARCH SCIENTIST, LAW AND JUSTICE STUDY CENTER, BATTELLE HUMAN AFFAIRS RESEARCH CENTERS, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. KARCHMER. Thank you, Senator Specter.

By way of introduction let me just mention our background in this area, and where in particular my comments would seem to be best focused I think.

We began to study the juvenile arson problem in 1979 under a grant from the U.S. Fire Administration, when we profiled a number of the juvenile fire setter counseling programs. In 1980, we began to do some work for the Aetna Life and Casualty Co. on a number of model community-oriented and juvenile fire setter programs, which resulted in a short publication on juvenile fire setters and school arson programs that has been widely disseminated and distributed throughout the country.

Currently, we are examining the need for an agenda of research programs, technical assistance, and training under a grant from the Ford Foundation. And as a matter of fact, we are going to convene tomorrow at the Washington office in downtown Washington to discuss where we need to go from here, first for juvenile fire setters and other types of programs.

I might mention that you and your staffs are cordially invited to attend the proceeding tomorrow.

My comments are really an extraction or summation of the material included in my prepared statement. There are several areas which I think are desperately in need of additional research and

should be the subject of demonstration programs. Let me just mention three in consideration of the very brief time that we have to make our comments.

First of all, there is a very strong connection, in my view, between vandalism arson and revenge arson, particularly in the case of juveniles. This is an issue that is extremely important to consider. When we look at the statistics on arson arrests, they hover around 42 percent or 38 percent or 50 percent, depending on the year and the particular auditing technique of the crime statistics one is examining.

Juvenile fire setting related to vandalism is an extremely serious problem. Many times juveniles arrested for arson are diverted from the juvenile system, and therefore do not appear in statistics. Juveniles express in their firesetting incidents anger, that is not only directed at individuals, it can be directed at institutions. This can be due to economic, social, even political reasons.

I think we need to look much more closely at the relationship and the motivation between juvenile vandalism firesetting and revenge oriented firesetting, which takes me to my second comment on revenge oriented arson.

Most of the studies have looked at juvenile firesetting, and try to break it down into the kinds of motives that run parallel to that adults demonstrate when they set arson fires. Very briefly, there is a real need, I think, for a thorough analysis of the distributon of motives, the reasons why juveniles commit arson.

One of the reasons that we need this is that in many cases revenge arson—and this is true of particularly adults—is preceded by threats to do bodily harm, to set fires, to kill someone. These precede the acts, and many times by a number of days. Therefore, threats represent a kind of activity that is preventable if indeed the threats are channeled to an appropriate authority. Usually, however, they are not.

I think there is an opportunity to look at juvenile firesetting behavior, particularly among the more serious offenders—those in their late teens, later adolescents who become involved in gang activity, who can become involved in rudimentary arson for profit, arson for extortion in a number of communities where we are seeing an influx of immigrants from foreign countries in our communities in the United States.

There is a real need to look at the extent to which we can prevent some of the more serious kinds of arson, particularly those where the juvenile does intend to do bodily harm or even commit murder. There is at the present time almost nothing on the issue of revenge oriented motives and the extent to which threats are a very good predictor of future criminal activity.

My third point goes to the need for really solid diagnostic instruments in the mental health area to try to separate those juveniles who commit firesetting acts whose activity is less serious and is amenable to counseling, such as the Firehawks Juvenile Counseling programs, from those juveniles who have very serious problems, are emotionally disturbed, and do intend many times to kill the intended victims.

There presently is no study, with which I am familiar, of the diagnostic instruments that can be easily used by juvenile courts,

and by county, city, and other public mental health facilities, to try and separate the more serious juveniles from those whose problems are less serious.

And since I am unfamiliar with the progress of the current U. S. Fire Administration manual on this topic, I will not address any more comments on this topic, other than it is my view that some kind of extensive research in this field is very timely and certainly warranted.

This concludes my statement.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Karchmer follows:]

Prepared Statement of Clifford L. Karchmer

Juvenile and adolescent firesetters account for a substantial and growing number of incendiary fires in the United States each year. According to statistics on arson arrests reported by the FBI in its 1982 annual Uniform Crime Report, juveniles between the ages of 13 and 19 years accounted for 42.8 percent of all arson arrestees. When arrested youths under the age of 13 are added to this base, over 50 per cent of all arson arrestees were juveniles in that year. This is a truly disturbing phenomenon, and is especially acute because the number of juveniles arrested for arson and related crimes, such as vandalism and malicious destruction of property, has been increasing steadily.

As a group, juvenile firesetters express unique needs that grow out of either temporary or long term emotional problems. When the youths are divided into basic cluster groups based on age, we see even more clearly the need for remedial programs that are developed around the needs of each such cluster. The most striking indication is that juveniles aged thirteen and under tend to have needs that are different from older adolescents, many of whom become truly hard core firesetters in their later teens.

Starting around 1979, a number of key intervention programs began to focus on the younger set of juvenile firesetters, ranging in age from around five years old to thirteen, whose firesetting shifted between intense curiosity and determination to injure someone or destroy property. As several of your other witnesses will no doubt testify, children in this cluster characteristically share such characteristics as poor achievement in school (noted by substandard reading skills), diminuitive physical build, and sensitivity to an absent or inattentive father in the family. I leave to other researchers, and particularly those in the mental health profession, the documentation of causal linkages between these and perhaps other signficant factors.

Programs for youths in this class have been the subject of several descriptive and analytic publications, by the Battelle Memorial Institute and other research bodies, and show that early diagnosis and counseling work wonders in reducing the recidivism of youths in this younger group. Unfortunately, however, there are fewer programs to address the needs of adolescents. Many adolescents set fires out of the same motivations as adult arsonists: revenge, jealousy, vandalism, crime concealment, intimidation, and even arson-for-profit; while other adolescent firesetters are psychiatrically disturbed, retarded, or are afflicted with other problems unrelated to the intentional setting of fires. In these cases, the absence of malicious intent does not in any way diminish the seriousness of the injuries, deaths, and destroyed property. Rather, the presence of underlying emotional problems means that treatment programs must be specially tailored if they are to be at all effective.

Recent concern over adolescent firesetting has grown as the numbers of destructive incidents have increased dramatically and the dollar losses incurred have mushroomed. By way of example, arson afflicting educational institutions has been receiving a great deal of attention lately because of the visibility to the community and the wanton destruction involved.

According to one study of school violence completed in the late 1970's, approximately 2,000 fires occurred in schools across the United States in a representative month. Of this rather disturbing total, I believe it was estimated that 50 to 70 percent of the fires were intentionally set by students. Anecdotal information indicates that it is not uncommon for all types of school fires--both accidental and incendiary--to result in losses of more than $1 million per incident. Unfortunately, we now have another nationwide public safety problem for school boards and school security officials to worry about.

Arson due to other motive problems includes juvenile involvement in arson-for-profit, where professional arsonists hire youths, usually without criminal records, to set fires. This phenomenon is reported to be

a growing if unevenly distributed problem in many localities, and is worsened by the ease with which youths can be recruited as semi-professional torches, often for payment as low as a six pack of beer. In communities as distinct from each other as Boston, San Francisco, New York, and Seattle, teenagers have been hired for small sums (never reported to exceed $50) to "torch" buildings--usually inner-city slum dwellings and failing businesses, as well as investment properties bought by unscrupulous speculators.

Youths reportedly also use arson to conceal and destroy evidence of criminal activities such as burglary and drug dealing. In addition, and perhaps more serious in terms of threats to life, juveniles are affected by revenge motives just like adult arsonists, who use fire as a violent tool to attack someone or some institution that is blamed for personal failure, humiliation, or rejection. In this motive category, we find parents and other close relatives, as well as schools, religious institutions, and public buildings.

Frequently, fire investigators note that arrested adult firesetters had histories of juvenile firesetting that went untreated or somehow were mishandled. The important point is that the thousands of adolescents, fire constitutes their introduction to the use of deadly violence as a "pressure valve" for serious stress or emotional problems that may endure throughout their lives, unless proper intervention, early on, provides an alternative.

What Can We Do?

Only recenly have public and private institutions begun to meet the threat of growing acts of destructive, expensive, and deadly juvenile arson. With the exception of a few articles on childhood experimentation with fire, there is a negligible literature on the treatment of non-psychotic young children--let alone adolescent--fire-setters. A number of fire departments have filled this void by responding with counseling

programs--in such cities as San Francisco, Seattle, Dallas, Los Angeles, and Prince Georges County, Maryland. These programs, which focus primarily on very young firesetters (6-12 years) whose motive frequently is curiosity or a mild emotional problem, have been extraordinarily successful. Most can legitimately boast of success (non-recidivism) rates of between 95 and 100 percent. Unfortunately, however, the needs of adolescent firesetters remain virtually unaddressed. Because many such older firesetters are seriously disturbed emotionally, we are facing a very seious problem nationwide. It remains to be seen whether the criminal sanction of arrest and adjudication, which often means binding youths over for grand jury action and trial, is the most effective way to deal with this growing body of firesetters. Presumably, someone or some institution has failed if early childhood firesetting is not detected until serious, indictable acts are committed later in adolescence.

In the firesetter counseling programs which serve as the basis of the National Firehawk Foundation, U. S. Fire Administration, and other significant programs, diagnostic and treatment services typically are provided by paraprofessionals. Here, nurses and fire investigators with some training meet and talk with the problem youths and, usually, their parents or guardians. Mental health professionals are not routinely involved in the design and implementation of most of those programs. As a result, we do not know whether vital diagnostic and treatment services are being performed so that the more serious firesetters receive appropriate treatment. This problem with respect to diagnostic services is even more acute in the case of adolescent firesetters, for whom adequare counseling and other treatment programs are fewer in number.

Any remedial program to address the unmet needs of both young child and adolescent juvenile firesetters should address, at a bare minimum, these objectives:

First, analyze and document the roles played by different motives that lie behind juvenile firesetting behavior. Presently, there is no such analysis nor an objective understanding of the full

dimensions of this problem at the national level. In my opinion, this is needed in order to properly inform juvenile justice and other policy deliberations.

Second, validate and document model diagnostic and treatment programs for public and private agencies to emulate, and primarily at the community-based level. The information could be obtained by working with mental health professionals experienced in juvenile firesetter problems, as well as selected fire service and criminal justice professionals with similar expertise.

By establishing programs to meet the above two objectives, public and private agencies should have direct access to a complete analysis of the juvenile firesetting problem in the United States, and to a set of practical, economical program models that stand as effective remedies.

The discussion of program models and how to replicate them should include a detailed description and discussion of requisite budgetary, personnel, and other resources that are necessary to implement each remedial approach. The informaton should be presented in a clear, simple manner in order to provide maximum assistance to jurisdictions presently without such programs.

ADDENDUM

Statement of Clifford L. Karchmer, Research Scientist,
Battelle Human Affairs Research Centers
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Karchmer. Thank you, Senator Specter.

By way of introduction, I would like to mention some of Battelle's background in this area in order to place my comments in proper perspective.

Battelle began to study the juvenile arson problem in 1980 under a grant from the U.S. Fire Administration, when we profiled a number of juvenile firesetter counseling programs. In 1982, we undertook a study for the Aetna Life and Casualty Company on model community-oriented and juvenile fire setter programs. That effort resulted in a publication, Juvenile Firesetters and School Arson Programs, which has been widely distributed throughout the country.

Currently, Battelle is studying the state-of-the art in arson

prevention and control, including juvenile firesetter programs, under a grant from the Ford Foundation. As one facet of the project, we are compiling an agenda of research, technical assistance, and training needs that remain to he addressed. As a matter of fact, we are going to convene tomorrow at the Battelle office in downtown Wasnington to discuss where and howe we should proceed, regarding juvenile firesetter and other types of community-oriented anti-arson programs. You and your respective staffs are cordially invited to attend the proceeding.

My comments are really a summation of the material included in my prepared statement. There are several areas which, I feel, are desperately in need of additional research and might also he the subjects of national focus demonstration programs. I will just mention three, in consideration of the hrief time that we have to summarize our comments.

First, when we look at the statistics on arson arrests involving juveniles, they have hovered in recent years hetween 38 percent and 50 percent, depending on the year and the auditing technique of the crime statistics one is examining. Yet, we know very little about the motive breakdown behind these juvenile arsons. There seems to he some connection hetween vandalism arson and revenge arson, particularly where juvenile firesetters are concerned. This is an issue that is extremely important to consider, hut this prohable and very critical connection has not been studied systematically.

Juvenile firesetting related to vandalism is an extremely serious problem. Juveniles express in their firesetting incidents anger directed not only at individuals hut also against institutions. And this anger can he due to economic, social, and even political reasons. Most such arson incidents are written off, summarily, as acts of vandalism and are not explained otherwise, although anger, hate, or some related form of revenge actually lies behind those acts.

Consequently, I think that we need to look more closely at the relationship and the motivation behind juvenile vandalism and revenge-oriented firesetting. That point takes me to my second comment on revenge oriented arson.

As you know, there have been few studies that have looked at juvenile firesetting. The prevailing assumption is that juvenile arson motives run

parallel to those of adults. If this is true, the revenge motive that is unrelated to vandalism is perhaps the one that we should be most concerned about, because it is the deadliest.

One reason why this issue should prove to be fruitful is that, in many cases, revenge arson is preceded by verbal threats to do bodily harm, to set a fire, or to kill someone. Many times the warning occurs a number of days before the arson occus and therefore represents a kind of activity that is preventable--if indeed the threats could be reported and channeled to an appropriate authority. Usually, however, they are not, and the tragic arsons occur.

I think there is an opportunity to look at revenge motivated juvenile firesetting behavior, particularly among the more serious offenders--those in their late teens. There is a real need to look at the extent to which we can prevent the more serious acts of juvenile arson, particularly those where the juvenile does intend to do bodily harm or even commit murder. There is, at the present time, almost nothing on the issue of revenge oriented motives in juvenile arson, and the extent to which threats might be a good predictor of future harmful activity.

My third point addresses the need for validated diagnostic instruments in the mental health area. These are needed to separate firesetting adolescents whose activity is less serious and is amenable to counseling, from other juveniles who have very serious problems, are emotionally disturbed, and often intend to kill or seriously injure their intended victims.

Presently, there is no research on evaluating diagnostic procedures involving firesetting, such that the results could be used easily by juvenile courts, and by mental health facilities to try and separate the more serious juvenile firesetters from those whose problems are less serious.

I might add that as I have not been informed of the recent progress on the U.S. Fire Administration manual on older adolescent firesetting, so I will not address any more comments on this topic--other than it is my view that a program of research in this whole field is very timely and certainly warranted.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much.

Let me address a question to the panel generally. Why is the rate of juvenile arsons going up at the present time? Chief Aron, do you want to take a crack at that?

Chief Marshal ARON. Why are juvenile arsons going up at the present time? I think in some areas, in some jurisdictions, they are getting away with it. There is not adequate investigations going on or active fire prevention programs to try to curb it.

Senator SPECTER. Do you think law enforcement is more lax today than it was 20 years ago? We could not get any sentences in the Philadelphia area 20 years ago.

Chief Marshal ARON. On arsons?

Senator SPECTER. Well, yes, on arson. On arson, on robbery, on burglary, on very serious offenses.

Chief Marshal ARON. Relating to my county, we are operating with a 47 percent clearance rate on arson fires.

Senator SPECTER. How are the sentences?

Chief Marshal ARON. Most of it they are pleading out.

Senator SPECTER. But what are the sentences?

Chief Marshal ARON. Six years, fines.

Senator SPECTER. Fines?

Chief Marshal ARON. Some fines.

Senator SPECTER. Six years.

Chief Marshal ARON. A lot of the ones, the older juveniles that we are getting involved with this are pleading out and getting sentenced.

Senator SPECTER. Do you think the system of criminal justice is different on the eastern side of the Delaware and the western side of the Delaware?

Chief Marshal ARON. I think you have a much more serious problem on the western side of the Delaware just by sheer population numbers.

Senator SPECTER. Ms. Clark, why do you think the arson rate is going up among juveniles?

Ms. CLARK. I think that as more unrest occurs broadly throughout the social system, more children are becoming caught as victims in family situations and stress for which they have no knowledge base for coping. Fire setting comes out of behavior that leads to feelings of relief——

Senator SPECTER. Why now more than before?

Ms. CLARK. Actually I am not sure that it is more now than before.

Senator SPECTER. Just more reported?

Ms. CLARK. More reported. And what happened is that each time I do a speaking engagement in which I focus on juvenile firesetters in an area which has never had a particular class in it, afterwards I become inundated from phone calls from fire officials saying I did not know that is what we had, we thought he was just a rotten kid, what can we do?

So I think one of the things that has happened we have increased indication.

Senator SPECTER. Mr. Karchmer.

Mr. KARCHMER. I concur with the other viewpoints and the statistics, which are facts that, yes, we are facing in juvenile systems

the same stresses and strains in our society that affect and afflict adults also affect and afflict juveniles.

Senator SPECTER. There are more stresses so there are more juvenile arsonists?

Mr. KARCHMER. Yes.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen for coming forward. We are concluded now, and just in time because the Banking Committee needs this room. I want to thank you very much for being with us.

I am going to send the findings we have had today both to the Attorney General, Mr. Meese, and to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

I think this is a very helpful hearing to underscore the continuing need for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. And I am going to recommend to them that a focus be directed to what Ms. McLaughlin has specified as to areas of research, and what Mr. Karchmer has said, and what Ms. Clark said about the need for more assistance in the mental rehabilitation line.

So I think it is important with a view to maintaining existing services and looking for new answers to the problem.

Thank you all very much. And that concludes the hearing.

[The Subcommittee recessed at 11:05 a.m.]

APPENDIX

(From the Milwaukee Journal Jan. 20, 1985)

Dangerous fascination

Youngsters learn about the hazards of fire

By Eugene Kane
of The Journal Staff

Some children naturally are attracted to fire, says Lt. Bruce Braidigan of the Milwaukee Fire Department.

From the time they first begin to notice the world around them, little ones are intrigued by a flickering blaze.

Usually the attraction wears off after their first accidental burn from a match or a stove. But for others, the fascination that fire holds can become dangerous.

According to the Fire Department, dozens of juveniles are connected with fires each year, whether small kitchen fires or destructive blazes that destroy valuable property.

Braidigan is in charge of the department's Juvenile Deterrent Fire Setter Program, which teaches youths caught playing with fire about potential hazards. Enrollment in the program is completely voluntary and done with the permission of parents.

The purpose of the program, Braidigan said, is to use education to prevent youngsters from developing into full-scale pyromaniacs.

"It was started in California a few years ago, and it was so successful that it spread across the country," said Braidigan, who is assigned to Engine 30 at 2900 N. Teutonia Ave.

Braidigan said the Milwaukee program had 20 fully trained counselors — regular firemen who have received the necessary training.

A private firm gave the department a financial grant to start the program. Since its inception about a year and a half ago, 125 children, 2 to 14 years of age, have been counseled.

The number of youngsters referred to the program each week averages four. So far, two children proved too difficult for firemen to help and were referred for professional counseling.

Referral program

"We're not doctors or psychiatrists . . . we're firemen," Braidigan explained. "If the problem is beyond our help, we recommend that they receive professional counseling."

The program has worked out an arrangement for such referrals with Children's Hospital.

Braidigan said there were two kinds of juvenile fire setters.

The first are motivated by curiosity. They are children who want to play with matches or candles, and usually set the fire in or near their home. Such children are given help first through an extensive interview and then in regular sessions where they are asked a series of questions designed to get them thinking about the effects of fire.

"We ask them things like, 'What the good things of fire are and what the bad things are.' You have to get down on a kid's level," said Braidigan. "You have to make them understand."

One of the fire prevention lectures consists of a slide presentation detailing the tragic death of a boy who, with a friend, started a fire in a garage. Braidigan said the film dealt with the hazards of playing with fire in a truthful and strong fashion in order to give the youngsters a hard message. The film is followed up with counseling sessions and talks.

The second, and more serious type of offender usually is an older child who destroys deliberately and realizes what he or she is doing, said Braidigan. One example is a youth who, because he doesn't want to go to school, sets a fire in the building.

"These are the ones we are concerned about," Braidigan said.

"They can grow up to become arsonists and pyromaniacs. They have a full understanding of what they are doing."

But, he said, "not all kids who set fires are juvenile delinquents or have mental problems."

From unstable homes

The majority of the serious fire setters come from broken or unstable homes, said Braidigan. The problem is not always the child's fault, he said. Many times the child is rebelling against a parent who has mistreated him or her.

As an example, he told of a 12-year-old boy who was locked in his bedroom for four weeks by his mother as punishment. The child started a fire in the room.

"The mother only let him out to go to the bathroom or to eat," he said. "The kid was crying out for help."

Most of the youths in the program have been referred by fire officials who learn about individual cases of juvenile fire setters. If a youth is picked up by police on suspicion of setting a fire, his treatment is outside the Fire Department's jurisdiction and must be handled through the juvenile courts.

Braidigan said the firemen who act as counselors take their work very seriously and study the latest educational techniques for new ideas. And they feel compassion for the disturbed children who start fires for attention or as a plea for help, he said.

"Some of them have tears in their eyes after talking with the kids," he said. "Chief [William] Stamm thinks it's the greatest program in the world."

Braidigan said neighborhoods interested in starting their own programs could get help from the department by calling 276-5656, ext. 230.

City of Milwaukee

Fire Department

William Stamm
Chief

Richard P. Seeren
Assistant Chief

July 30, 1984

Mr. William H. Schultz, P.E.
Factory Mutual Engineering Association
3335 North Mayfair Road
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222

Dear Mr. Schultz:

Enclosed is a proposal outlining a coordinated intergovernmental Juvenile Firesetter Deterrent Program for the Milwaukee Fire Department.

We have determined that the proposed program is the best approach to helping children who set fires every day in our city. I am, therefore, requesting support from your organization to ensure that the City of Milwaukee and its surrounding communities, through knowledge and training, help the children and their families to live a fire-free life.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM STAMM
Chief

WS:mh

Enc.

711 West Wells Street Milwaukee Wisconsin 53233 Phone (414) 276-5856

PART I

INFORMATION AND TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED

PART 1 - Budget Information and Budget Narrative

A. Budget Detail

1.	Equipment	$ 1,490.00
2.	Supplies and Operating Expenses	600.00
		$ 2,090.00

B. Budget Narrative

1. Equipment

Apple IIe)
Apple Monitor)
Apple 80 Disc Drive) --- $ 1,490.00
Brother HR-15 Printer)

When a child becomes involved in firesetting, it is a problem with serious consequences for both their families and the community. This equipment will let us get facts quickly, organize our time and keep records and fires up to date, simply and quickly. We will be able to let other departments know of a firesetter when they move to a new community.

It is important that these children receive some early attention before their interest in fire and their relatively innocent fireplay leads to serious intentional firesetting behaviors.

2. Supplies and Operating Expenses $ 600.00

This would include supplies and expenses for equipment to operate computer.

TOTAL $ 2,090.00

PART II

HISTORY OF JUVENILE FIRESETTER PROGRAM

The Juvenile Firesetter Program has been in operation for the last three (3) years. In this period of time we have interviewed over 350 children who have either been playing with fire or setting fires. The Program is currently staffed by twenty-seven (27) counselors and is headed by Fire Lieutenant Bruce Braidigan.

When children are counselled by one of our staff members there are a series of steps they must follow, starting with the initial contact and the setting up of an appointment. Once they get into the interview stage and determine where the problem lies, there are a number of directions which they can go.

We have a Referral Program set up with Childrens Hospital who will accept children that are referred for professional help. We now are working with a private doctor who will treat children whose families want to go in that direction.

As of this date, we have not had one child return to us after he or she has been counselled. Our staff members work hard at teaching fire safety and education to these children and their families. It is only through continued education and counseling that we can help the children of this community not to become arsonists at a later stage in their life.

PART III

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

Milwaukee County is 239 square miles and all of it is incorporated into 19 cities and villages. The City of Milwaukee, with 96 square miles, is the largest municipality in the county and is located on Lake Michigan. The city occupies the east and central portion of the county and is completely surrounded by suburban municipalities.

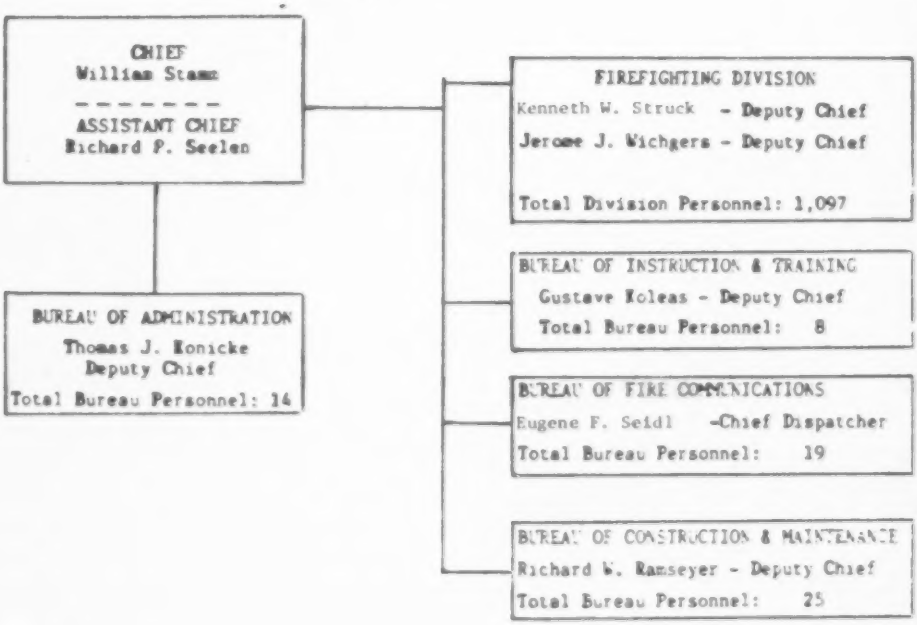
The estimated population of Milwaukee County is approximately 960,993. About 2/3 of this (629,256) is in the City of Milwaukee. Milwaukee County is by far the most populous area of the State of Wisconsin. It reached a peak population in 1970 with just over 1,000,000 population and has declined slightly since then. The City of Milwaukee reached its population peak of 741,324 in 1960, and like many other large cities, has declined although not to the degree of some others.

Using a computer to aid the Juvenile Firesetter Program would make information more readily available to assist our counselors in their work. This information would also aid other cities in cases where a child moves from one city to another.

By recognizing children and their families' educational needs relative to safety and professional mental health assistance, we can then reduce the property loss to our community and state.

PART IV

ORGANIZATION CHART



PART V

LONG TERM OUTLOOK AND GOALS

We feel our Juvenile Firesetter Program represents a real team effort between the firefighters and the parents who bring their children for help. Our Program has been so successful in helping the children of our community that it has developed into a long term project.

An average of One Thousand Dollars ($1,000.00) a year is needed to operate this Program successfully. This money is used for new training films, posters, training of personnel by national speakers, and operating supplies. Because we do not have a budget to operate this Program, its total success depends on gaining funds from other sources.

By working with other departments, we haved gained and exchanged information which greatly helps our program expand. Currently, we hold two (2) or three (3) training sessions a year for all departments interested in increasing their knowledge in juvenile firesetters.

PART VI

BREAKDOWN OF FIRE'S 1981-82-83

CLASSIFIED BUILDING FIRES ATTENDED TO BY THE DEPARTMENT

	1982		1981	
	Number	Loss	Number	Loss
Apartment Houses	401	$ 1,346,870	451	$1,691,922
Bakeries	1	50	0	0
Breweries	1	0	1	0
Churches	9	58,050	5	5,976
Dry Cleaning Establishments	3	1,600	3	22,922
Dwellings (One and Two Family)	955	4,730,121	998	3,574,620
Garages (Private) and Barns	203	524,701	228	439,927
Garages (Public)	12	9,980	4	350
Garages (Repair)	10	53,950	1	3,124
Gasoline Service Stations	1	500	7	750
Grain Elevators	3	15,000	0	0
Hospitals	27	10,255	19	7,525
Hotels/Motels	17	54,097	16	14,115
Junk and Waste Material Buildings	1	2,200	4	613
Laundrees and Laundromats	17	9,085	14	49,566
Manufacturing Plants	58	356,435	81	358,452
Nursing Homes	7	2,100	12	20,445
Offices	22	225,125	27	107,958
Printing Establishments	1	0	1	0
Public Utilities	0	0	1	0
Restaurants	25	730,775	35	272,169
Rooming Houses	34	120,150	32	13,625
Schools (Public)	20	44,875	20	27,695
Schools (Private)	3	6,000	6	30,975
Storage	5	54,700	10	143,225
Store-Dwellings	7	13,025	11	124,725
Stores and Apartments	52	506,525	52	1,108,951
Stores and Offices	8	4,325	9	11,510
Stores (Department)	9	1,325	2	3,000
Stores (Miscellaneous)	25	85,548	24	103,735
Shops (Tin, Machine, Paint, etc.)	2	0	5	9,900
Taverns	19	297,197	21	572,003
Theaters and Assembly Buildings	4	140	10	9,291
Vacant Buildings	144	783,125	174	918,676
Warehouses	9	702,350	9	150,799
Wholesale Houses	2	600	0	0
Miscellaneous (Sheds, etc.)	14	14,175	26	18,000
TOTALS	2,131	$10,764,954	2,319	$9,816,550

1982 Increase in Building Loss . . . . . $ 948,404

Buildings . . . . . .42.66% total fires in 1982

Other than Buildings . . . . . .16.70% total fires in 1982

Grass, Dump and Rubbish . . . . . .19.68% total fires in 1982

Automobiles on Street . . . . . .20.96% total fires in 1982

PART VI

CLASSIFIED BUILDING FIRES ATTENDED TO BY THE DEPARTMENT

	1983		1982	
	Number	Loss	Number	Loss
Apartment Houses	405	1,255,243	401	1,346,870
Bakeries	0	-	1	50
Breweries	2	-0-	1	0
Churches	7	39,900	9	58,050
Dry Cleaning Establishments	0	-	3	1,600
Dwellings (One and Two Family)	819	3,899,309	955	4,730,121
Garages (Private) and Barns	170	363,745	203	524,701
Garages (Public)	5	7,600	12	9,980
Garages (Repair)	12	74,790	10	53,950
Gasoline Service Stations	4	1,400	1	500
Grain Elevators	0	-	3	15,000
Hospitals	26	7,625	27	10,255
Hotels/Motels	16	5,445	17	54,097
Junk and Waste Material Buildings	6	2,800	1	2,200
Laundries and Laundromats	15	45,800	17	9,085
Manufacturing Plants	50	737,450	58	356,435
Nursing Homes	10	2,750	7	2,100
Offices	22	566,275	22	225,125
Printing Establishments	0	-	1	0
Public Utilities	1	-0-	0	0
Restaurants	24	110,316	25	730,775
Rooming Houses	19	11,350	34	120,150
Schools (Public)	10	1,900	20	44,875
Schools (Private)	5	825	3	6,000
Storage	10	11,575	5	54,700
Store-Dwellings	9	145,650	7	13,025
Stores and Apartments	29	269,255	52	506,525
Stores and Offices	5	46,200	8	4,325
Stores (Department)	0	-	9	1,325
Stores (Miscellaneous)	25	47,250	25	85,548
Shops (Tin, Machine, Paint, etc.)	0	-	2	0
Taverns	24	341,958	19	297,197
Theaters and Assembly Buildings	6	1,625	4	140
Vacant Building	119	823,546	144	783,125
Warehouses	14	73,400	9	702,350
Wholesale Houses	1	4,000	2	600
Miscellaneous (Sheds, etc.)	7	15,750	14	14,175
TOTALS	1,877	8,914,732	2,131	$10,764,954

1983 Decrease in Building Loss $1,850,222

Buildings . . . . . 42.52% total fires in 1983

Other than Buildings . . . . . 16.74% total fires in 1983

Grass, Dump and Rubbish . . . . . 18.13% total fires in 1983

Automobiles on Street . . . . . 22.61% total fires in 1983

PART VI

CAUSES OF FIRES ATTENDED TO BY THE DEPARTMENT

	1982		1981	
	Number	Loss	Number	Loss
Automobile and Truck fires	1,047	$ 677,580	930	$ 511,752
Carelessness with matches	29	58,225	33	125,764
Children playing with matches	125	712,446	134	796,674
Cigarettes, cigars, pipes	196	521,455	209	910,378
Clothes dryers, (gas & electric)	55	46,759	60	61,628
Chimneys, defective	9	26,500	7	34,320
Defective furnaces, boilers, stoves pipes, etc.	4	7,725	1	50
Electric wires and appliances, etc.	239	1,389,170	264	949,534
Explosions	7	297,000	3	105,750
Gas, gasoline, oil stoves	105	41,600	132	263,311
Grass, brush, rubbish fires	983	-	1,254	-
Inattentive cooking	274	82,475	316	79,617
Hot ashes, coal	14	14,950	20	165,807
Incendiary (known and supposed)	659	4,213,716	711	2,816,669
Lightning	6	18,450	18	15,490
Oil burners	4	2,100	8	3,459
Oil/Gas space heaters	15	56,369	4	525
Overheated furnaces, boilers, stoves pipes, etc.	50	113,541	49	90,217
Sparks from chimneys and stacks	6	13,700	2	1,000
Sparks from furnaces, stoves, etc.	5	30,000	4	2,259
Spontaneous ignition	6	7,000	11	5,700
Thawing frozen pipes	2	925	-	-
Torches - acetylene	15	6,925	29	259,281
Torches - blow and propane	18	12,050	15	25,854
Miscellaneous	162	216,500	157	406,539
Unknown	960	2,980,343	1,056	2,890,799
TOTALS	4,995	$11,547,504	5,429	$10,522,377

1982 Decrease in Fires Attended 434

1982 Increase in Losses in Fires Attended 1,025,127

PART VI

CAUSES OF FIRES ATTENDED TO BY THE DEPARTMENT

	1983		1982	
	Number	Loss	Number	Loss
Automobile and Truck fires	998	719,702	1,047	677,580
Carelessness with matches	20	53,625	29	58,225
Children playing with matches	121	784,835	125	712,446
Cigarettes, cigars, pipes	157	377,180	196	521,455
Clothes dryers, (gas & electric)	51	10,265	55	46,759
Chimneys, defective	5	6,700	9	26,500
Defective furnaces, boilers, stoves pipes, etc.	0	-	4	7,725
Electric wires and appliances, etc.	214	563,390	239	1,389,170
Explosions	4	64,750	7	297,000
Gas, gasoline, oil stoves	80	26,753	105	41,600
Grass, brush, rubbish fires	801	-	983	-
Inattentive cooking	281	193,350	274	82,475
Hot ashes, coal	25	31,500	14	14,950
Incendiary (known and supposed)	478	3,214,196	659	4,213,716
Lightning	8	11,300	6	18,450
Oil burners	6	33,200	4	2,100
Oil/Gas space heaters	13	56,075	15	56,369
Overheated furnaces, boilers, stoves pipes, etc.	47	741,817	50	113,541
Sparks from chimneys and stacks	5	5,800	6	13,700
Sparks from furnaces, stoves, etc.	1	-0-	5	30,000
Spontaneous ignition	8	42,800	6	7,000
Thawing frozen pipes	2	700	2	925
Torches - acetylene	30	12,650	15	6,925
Torches - blow and propane	17	33,850	18	12,050
Miscellaneous	160	197,335	162	216,500
Unknown	883	2,505,611	960	2,980,343
TOTAL	4,415	$9,687,384	4,995	$11,547,504

1983 Decrease in Fires Attended 580

1983 Increase in Losses in Fires Attended $1,860,120

PART VII

SUMMARY

Children involved in firesetting is a significant problem which needs immediate attention. Children who become involved in firesetting are not pyromaniacs, rather they are more mischievous and aggressive than their peers. They often set fires out of anger and frustation. It is important that these children receive some early attention before their relatively innocent fireplay leads to serious and intentional firesetting. Fire departments and firefighting have a positive community image which helps them to successfully work with children.

American Red Cross

Greater Milwaukee Chapter
2600 W. Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233
Phone 342-8680

December 3, 1984

Lt. Bradigan
Juvenile Deterrent Firesetters Program
711 W. Wells
Milwaukee, Wis. 53233

Dear Lt. Bradigan,

I want to thank you and your staff for the excellent presentation on the Juvenile Deterrent Firesetters Program which you gave at our Disaster Action Team Meeting. We sincerely support you in your efforts and will continue to make referrals to the program. Thank you again for taking the time to meet with us.

Sincerely yours,

Kathleen M. Knelin

Kathleen M. Knelin
Disaster Services Coordinator

Phone 671-4300

Zip 53206-2

Office of

MILWAUKEE FIRE DEPARTMENT

864-15

August 2, 1984

TO: Department Personnel

RE: JUVENILE FIRESETTER PROGRAM

The Juvenile Firesetter Program has been experiencing an increasing workload in the area of counseling. This Program will require changes to assure its continuing success. Effective immediately, the following procedures will be followed:

-- Each shift will have a Coordinator and an Assistant Coordinator. They will be responsible for all assignments and will coordinate all operations of the program on their respective shift.

-- When Dispatchers receive a call relating to a juvenile firesetter, ONLY a Coordinator or Assistant Coordinator shall be contacted.

-- Any questions relating to the program shall be directed to Fire Lieutenant Bruce W. Braidigan who is the Director of the entire Program.

Director, F. Lieut. Bruce Braidigan (L. 38)

	RED SHIFT	GREEN SHIFT	BLUE SHIFT
Coordinator	- Lt. Robert A. Miller (L.8)	Lt. Brian Wachowiak (E.5)	Lt. David Balkowski (L.1
Asst. Coord.	- FF Sylvester Krimmer (L.38)	Lt. Wayne Simmons (E.37)	FF Bobby Parker (~~L.38~~ (E.37)

WILLIAM STAMM
Chief

WS:mok

State of Wisconsin
Circuit Court

Chambers of
Judge Charles B. Schudson
Branch 1, Milwaukee County

10201 West Watertown Plank Road
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226

October 19, 1984

Mr. Bruce W. Braidigan
Fire Lieutenant
Milwaukee Fire Department
711 West Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dear Lieutenant Braidigan:

Thank you for your letter of October 15, 1984, regarding your Juvenile Fire Setter Program.

I am very interested and pleased to learn of your excellent program. Enclosed is a copy of the May 4, 1984, letter that I wrote to Chief Stamm on that very subject. I suggest that you prepare a very short summary of the program (no more than one page) and provide it to Children's Court Chief Probation Officer Kathy Malone. A copy also should go to each Children's Court judge. Then, whenever a child comes to the court who would be appropriate for the program, participation can be ordered as a condition of probation. As so often is the case here, half the battle is having an excellent program. The other half is making sure that the appropriate persons know about it.

When it is convenient for you, please feel free to visit at the Children's Court Center. I am delighted to know of your efforts. Keep up the excellent work.

Sincerely,

Charles B. Schudson
Circuit Court Judge

CBS:lb

cc: Kathy Malone

City of Milwaukee

Fire Department

William Stamm
Chief

Richard P. Seelen
Assistant Chief

November 2, 1984

The Honorable Howard R. Tietz
Alderman, 9th Aldermanic District
Room 205, City Hall
200 East Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Dear Alderman Tietz:

As per your request, the following information is being provided regarding the Milwaukee Fire Department Juvenile Fire Setter Program:

In June of 1981 while attending a State Arson Seminar on his own, Lieut. Bruce W. Braidigan heard a National Fire Academy speaker talking about said program. Lieut. Braidigan was so impressed with the program that he informed Chief Stamm immediately upon his return. Inasmuch as Chief Stamm also was impressed by Lieut. Braidigan's report, he instructed Lieut. Braidigan to pursue means and methods to institute such a program in Milwaukee.

Lieut. Braidigan approached various fire insurance companies and was successful in obtaining a twenty-five hundred ($2,500.00) dollar grant from Factory Mutual Insurance Company. The grant funds were used to set up training classes of which Lieut. Braidigan personally trained 30 fire department members; educational programs to teach children fire safety; printing of a book entitled "Your Child and Matches"; and posters to make the citizens of Milwaukee aware of our new program.

To date, Lieut. Braidigan and his 30 trained counselors have interviewed and counseled over 400 children with a fire-setting problem in the City of Milwaukee.

Lieut. Braidigan is also responsible for setting up a referral program where parents may take their children for professional help, if necessary.

We are very pleased with the results of this program and, needless to say, very proud of Fire Lieutenant Braidigan and his staff of counselors.

If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Richard P. Seelen

RICHARD P. SEELEN
Assistant Chief

RPS:mh

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE

INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE May 10, 1985

TO All Children's Court Center Professional Staff

FROM Bob Stelter, Community Resource Coordinator

SUBJECT JUVENILE FIRE SETTER PROGRAM

Do you know that in the Milwaukee area, over 50% of all arson fires are set by juveniles under 14?

No, I didn't realize that either!

Do you know that the Milwaukee Fire Department has a specialized program which offers screening, identification and treatment for those identified as being a potential firesetter?

No, I didn't know that either until just recently.

Earlier this year, I attended a meeting at the Fire Department Training Academy attended by the Children's Court Judges where this new program was described. Essentially, it is a screening program where children, identified as having potential problems in dealing with fire, are referred to the Milwaukee Fire Department. This individual is given a standarized screening interview and if indicated, the child is referred for treatment to a psychologist or psychiatrist with special training in this area.

I have received two assurances by Fire Department Administration. First, any child we refer, no matter where he lives the Milwaukee Metropolitan Area, will be served. Second, no child identified as needing treatment will be turned away.

We have invited Lt. Bruce Braidigan who is in charge of this program to come to the Children's Court Center to give us details of this important program.

Please reserve Friday, May 17, 1985 from 10:30 to 11:30 A.M. and come to the Lower Assembly Room. Lt. Braidigan will be here to give us details and referral information on this significant program.

rlr

Office of

MILWAUKEE FIRE DEPARTMENT

May 16, 1985

TO: Department Personnel

RE: JUVENILE FIRESETTER PROGRAM

Recently our department received 5,000 Juvenile Firesetter posters through the courtesy of TV-6. It is important that these posters reach areas where parents can see them and learn of our program.

Upon receipt of these posters and when Companies are out inspecting, stop and ask managers of businesses, shopping centers, churches, schools, day care centers or any place where numbers of parents could see them, if they would display one in a prominent place in their building.

Each Company should receive about 70 posters shortly after this notice.

William Stamm

WILLIAM STAMM
Chief

WS:mh

WHEREAS

LIEUTENANT BRICE W. BRADIGAN

was the driving force behind the need for a Juvenile Fire Setter Program in the Milwaukee Fire Department; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Bradigan, who has always been interested in arson investigation, approached various fire insurance companies and was successful in obtaining a grant to set up training classes for the program; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Bradigan personally trained 30 fire department members, set up educational programs to teach children fire safety, oversaw the printing of a book entitled "Your Child and Matches", and distributed posters to make the citizens of Milwaukee aware of the new program; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Bradigan and his staff have interviewed and counseled over 600 children with a fire-setting problem, and have set-up a referral program where parents may take their children for professional help when necessary; and

WHEREAS, A member of the Milwaukee Fire Department for almost 20 years and a Lieutenant for the past 5 years, Lieutenant Bradigan was an assistant instructor at the Milwaukee Fire Department Training Academy for 4 years; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Bradigan has always been involved in civic and community organizations and has demonstrated his concern for the safety of the citizens of Milwaukee; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee herewith commends Lieutenant Bradigan on his accomplishments with the Juvenile Fire Setter Program, and herewith extends its heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the citizens, for his outstanding civic awareness and concern; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitably engrossed copy of this Resolution be presented to Lieutenant Bradigan, a remarkable and highly regarded individual.

Introduced by Alderman Howard R. Tietz.

Alderman John R. Kalwitz
President of the Common Council

Ben L. Johnson
City Clerk

City of Milwaukee

Fire Department

William Stamm
Chief

Richard P. Seelen
Assistant Chief

June 4, 1985

Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania
Chair of the Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Specter:

Thank you for inviting us to submit information on our Juvenile Firesetter Program.

We commend you for calling a meeting on such an important matter to consider the problem of juvenile arsonists and firestarters, which is one of the great problems currently facing metropolitan cities.

The juvenile firesetter problem has been recognized as a major cause of incendiary fires in America. Communities across the country report that 40-70% of all documented, intentionally set fires are set by children under the age of 18. The fire service has dealt with these children for years without adequate preparation in screening and assessing their needs. Providing intervention was primarily based on "scare tactics" without knowledge and awareness of various intervention options and available community resources.

There are two reasons why children set fires. The first reason is curiosity or accidental. The curiosity firesetter is in every child's life, especially between the ages of two and eight years of age. The majority of fires set by children are set out of curiosity or accidental. We must start teaching our children about fire safety in the home and at our schools. The second reason is the child who is crying for help. This could result in a major crisis in the child's life or from peer pressure. Some of these children will need professional help.

Where do we begin dealing with the problem of the juvenile firesetter? The Milwaukee Fire Department started by realizing that there is a very strong need of having a Juvenile Firesetter Program. We set up a program through monies received from a grant that focused on the need for an attitude change in those who deal with the children.

A training program was set up to instruct fire service personnel that (1) all fires set by children are not necessarily deliberate or maliciious, (2) that fire setting is not the problem, but the symptom of the problem, and (3) that targeted approaches of teaching or punishing the child who is expressing needs through firesetting will not necessarily curb the behavior.

Teaching fire service personnel how to refer children and families for appropriate professional counseling was one of our major concerns.

We then met with Dr. Lucille Glicklich of the Milwaukee Children's Hospital who helped us set up a referral program. That program now is in full operation and when we refer a child for professional counseling, he or she is immediately taken. We meet monthly with the staff of Children's Hospital and talk on how the program is progressing and how we can improve the program's operation.

Our next step was to meet with the Judges of the Juvenile Courts, Probation Officers, and the District Attorneys. Our objective was to inform them of our program and its operation. Once we received the support of the Courts, the child's involvement in our program was mandatory as a part of his/her probation. We have received from the Courts, 20 children whom we have counseled that were involved in setting major fires in our community, one fire had a loss of $750,000.00.

No program will function effectively unless it is properly advertised. We took our program to the local T.V. stations. We did some short mini-series on the evening news talking about our program and how to get in touch with us. Just lately, we did a 30 second spot using a baseball play from the Milwaukee Brewers. When the Brewers are in town, a message is placed on the scoreboard fan-a-gram telling about our program.

We went to the local newspapers and had short articles written about our program. Recently, we received 5,000 Juvenile Firesetter posters through the courtesy of a local T.V. station (enclosed). These posters will be placed in businesses, shopping centers, churches, schools, day care centers, or any place where numbers of parents could see them.

Earlier in the year, we wrote for and received a grant that enabled us to purchase a computer for our program. In this computer, we can keep all information on the children we counseled and the results and statistics of our program.

No program can operate without a good working staff. The Milwaukee Fire Department has trained 45 counselors, who now work with the juveniles and their families. Our dispatchers have a list of our on duty counselors and any time we receive a call, it is immediately transferred to one of them.

Our staff has put together a pamphlet called "Your Child and Matches" (enclosed). The pamphlet tells about juvenile firesetting, fire-setting behavior, traits commonly found in children who set fires, and how to get in touch with a counselor.

We are now in the process of making up a slide presentation for different age groups. These slides will be used to teach children fire safety and what can result from playing with fire.

Our main thrust is to work towards stopping the fires before they start. By working with the community, by promoting fire safety education, and helping the child who needs help, we can rid this country of the juvenile firesetter problem.

It is truly clear that this can be done when one takes a look at the Milwaukee Fire Department's success rate. Only two repeaters were re-referred out of over 400 children counseled since the inception of the program in October of 1982.

I am also enclosing a "Burn Prevention Guide" provided as a handout to children and their families. This brochure was donated by our local burn hospital - St. Mary's Hospital.

Also enclosed is a newspaper article relative to the program, grant proposal, department notice on counselors, and letters of support from involved judges.

The Director of our Juvenile Firesetter Program is Fire Lieutenant Bruce Braidigan of the Milwaukee Fire Department, and he can be contacted through this office.

Respectfully Submitted,

WILLIAM STAMM
Chief

WS:gw
Enclosures